LECTURES ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST

MONSIGNOR LANDRIOT

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LECTURES ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST

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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

MONSIGNOR LANDRIOT,

Sometime Archbishop of Rheims.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

THE REV. P. N. WAGGETT, S.S.J.E.

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TO THE READER.

The eloquent and affectionate book, you are now to read in English, carries its own commendation. "Its praise is in the Churches." Its ardently believing author is always attractive, paternal, converting. He speaks as a father in his family, and he commands the language current in the home of faith. But he speaks also with the compassionate solicitude of a pastor, who, while addressing the believing flock, is within the hearing of doubters and of men unable to accept the faith, as he opens with persuasive, but careful, generosity, the stores of his accomplished learning. His ardour makes him push "jusqu'à ses dernières limites, la hardiesse de l'affirmation," and yet, many may well learn from this book and especially through the abundant quotations in the Second Conference from the Fathers and theologians of many ages, a new carefulness to avoid any "carnal" sense in their confession of the Real Presence.

But though no word of introduction is necessary, the very place and time of the book's origin may be recalled as not without significance.

These pastoral addresses were given at La Rochelle in 1866, the year before the Bishop became Archbishop of Rheims, that is to say, they belong to a time, within five years of the Franco-German War, when the Second Empire of Napoleon still appeared solid (as a shining surface can give an impression of mass), when the order of the world seemed stable and definite, rather than moving and eventful, and when Bishops like Landriot still hoped that no new dogma would open fresh gates of difficulty; for the Vatican Decree on infallibility though near was still future.

Moreover, La Rochelle was the centre of a region once famous for its attachment to the Protestantism of

Calvin, and the rank and file of the Church might find in that an occasion for fervour and precision in the faith. The criticism of Strauss and Renan, too, was still a force, and believing France found its best defence in positive reaffirmation of the supernatural in religion.

By the needs and opportunities, here hinted at, *we* are the gainers. The faithful pastor, surrounded by his loyal and confident flock, glows with joy as he displays the resources of learning, and repeats the ever acceptable argument that the Evangelical promises mean what they say.

"Am I to believe," he seems to cry, "that our Saviour was content to see forty generations of His believers deceived, or else was unable to find in His Divine Wisdom means to undeceive them, when their minds, by the attraction of His words, were turned to His last gift of love?"

I, for my part, trust that you will catch in this English version the accents of a great teacher and be encouraged; that the dry ground of hesitation may be broken up and the springs of grateful faith released. I think it possible the reader may come to be aware that some teaching is absent to which we are accustomed in the English Church. The Holy Eucharist is spoken of as *witnessed* to by Holy Church, but we desire words to revive our faith that the mystery of the Eucharist has its *very Being* in the Church, that the Church is more than the scene and place of the saving acts, but the very organ of those acts of grace and power; that God the Holy Spirit, the Creator and Sustainer of the Church, creates in that Church and ever sustains or (if you will) renews the presence of Christ's Body and Blood, for spiritual food and spiritual Sacrifice. This is connected with another need which the reader may not think fully met. The Catholic reader of the Church of England may desire, and will miss, a manifest emphasis on the relation of the Real Presence and of Holy Communion to the

Eucharistic Sacrifice. That great subject does not stand out in the discourses, nor engage the Bishop's very accomplished power of exposition. It may be that precious *time* in the pulpit had to be saved for the admirable treatment of the subject of frequent Communion, but a *relative* silence about the Sacrifice there certainly is.

But if silence should be found complete, this would not be altogether surprising. For, at the time of his teaching, the subject was again one of differing opinions and even controversy. The Theology of De Lugo had been revived, supported by Franzelin and Perrone, which maintained the doctrine that the essence of our Lord's continual sacrifice involved destruction, or, at least, repeated deprivation. Franzelin's work on the subject was to appear in 1868 and Perrone, whose principal work was earlier than Landriot's, was still teaching in Rome. Our lectures, therefore, came at a moment when the subject was more than ever difficult.

The fact is it was not often the mediæval way to write about the Sacrifice. Theologians were occupied in asserting the Real Presence; and theologically, Landriot belongs a little to the later mediæval age.

Anglo-Catholics used to the more confident teaching of the one Sacrifice, which by God's Mercy characterises our Church life, may well turn to the great English Divines of the last century, Pusey, Forbes—and more particularly in connection with the present book a Bishop of the same moment, Walter Kerr Hamilton, Bishop of Salisbury, who, a year after these conferences, sent out his Charge of 1867.

I transcribe a passage from it:—

"By consecration the gifts receive an inward part even the *res sacramenti*—the Body and Blood of Christ—this consecration of the gifts stands in closest relation to another great function; that sacrificial action, which is the counterpart of Christ's perpetual pleading and presentation of His Body and Blood in our behalf,

is consummated when the bread and wine are made the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood."

If I may end with another quotation, it shall be from Father Benson. May the present translation made in true faith and charity help us to pray as his words tell us. "For purification of heart that the Divine Mystery of the Eucharist may be rightly contemplated and adored, for Divine love, that we may worthily join in the Heavenly Sacrifice, and for such hunger and thirst after righteousness, that we may be filled with abundance of grace in the Holy Communion."

P. N. WAGGETT, S.S.J.E.

Cowley,
Eastertide, 1926.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The following Lectures were delivered by Monsignor Landriot, Archbishop of Rheims, in the Cathedral of La Rochelle during the Advents of 1859 and 1863, and at Rochefort on the Sundays in Lent, 1866.

It has been thought that the Bishop's deeply devotional mind, and width of thought, in dealing with the great subject of the Holy Eucharist, may make his lectures acceptable to English people. The translation is considerably shorter than the original, although none of the author's teaching, arguments or deductions have been omitted or altered. Only a certain redundancy of expression has been pruned, and some obvious repetitions omitted, with some of the longer notes from other writers.

It seems also necessary to draw attention to a real difficulty in the author's use of the words "substance" and "accidents," as, especially in English, these words are now commonly used in the very opposite sense to that which he intends, and which they originally conveyed.

In the philosophy on which S. Thomas Aquinas based his beautiful treatise and to which the author freely refers, substance meant the invisible reality or being which underlies each thing, quite apart from its appearance or extent, and which could not be proved by the senses but only by reason or intuition: the accidents meant the size, appearance, quantity, etc., of each body, by which it was known to the senses. It is obvious that the words "substance," "substantial," etc., is now in ordinary talk commonly applied to that which most appeals to the senses, while the word accidents is no longer used except in a totally different way. This modern use of the words might seem to weaken the arguments from analogy and the inference so drawn, especially in the second Lecture, for the

use of the word transubstantiation. But in reality the teaching of S. Thomas Aquinas is more in harmony with modern philosophy and science, than when he propounded it, because it can now be applied not only to one point of faith or aspect of being, but to the whole connected system of existence.[1]

"We shall always," says Bishop Gore, "need the idea of substance, as reality or 'real thing,' that which underlies appearance." We probably owe the change in the common use of the word to the age of materialism, which followed the fall of scholastic philosophy, when substance or reality was only applied to that which most appealed to the senses; but many transitions of thought have taken place since then.

Father Dalgairns has sketched very cleverly the passage of philosophy and science during the last three centuries, through various schools of thought: it may almost be summed up as the passage from the materialisation of the spiritual to the spiritualisation of the material in the present day.

Under new names the old teaching survives practically unassailable. The formula may differ, the fundamental idea is strikingly similar: for are not the "discoveries" of science becoming more and more revelations of God to a willing mind? Matter, it is now held, does not necessitate the idea of space or extent, it is taken up by innumerable forces, the modern equivalent for substance, which differentiate it and regulate its body or appearance; these forces are themselves under the control of the wholly unexplained mystery of "life."

What, then, are substance, reality, being, force, truth, but different words for the same Power: inexplicable to reason only—but far clearer to the mind of a believer. A profound philosophical thought is expressed in a very common form of words "the truth of the matter," that is, the truth or reality, often unknown,

[1] Dalgairns, J. B., *Holy Communion*, Chapter II., *Modern Theories of Matter.*

which underlies an appearance, whether incidental or existent, and makes it what it is.

We may truly say that Landriot is only following the teaching by analogy between natural and spiritual Life given by our Lord Himself in parables; but modern thought has seen not only analogy but identity of order or law. Professor Drummond in his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* brought out with great beauty and fearlessness the wonderful analogies, shown to us by science, between nature and revelation, and his explanation is that, if the same order is found, the Law that makes them parallel is one:—"that parallel phenomena depend upon identical laws."[2] After reading such chapters as his "Biogenesis" or "Conformity to Type," one only marvels how he could resist emphasising the light thrown on the whole principle of Sacramental teaching. Science to him vindicates the naturalness of the supernatural, while it demonstrates the supernaturalness of the natural.

Father Benson was not afraid to use scientific terms in his most spiritual writings. Speaking of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he writes:

"Consider what the human body really is. It consists of a certain force which is found animating matter and filling it with certain powers which cannot be found elsewhere. . . . The Body of Christ was not glorified in order to remain as an isolated being. His body was to make its force felt throughout creation. . . . The Apostles had been brought into connection with this Body by feeding upon it at the Last Supper, when, therefore, Christ's Body was completely glorified, there could be no delay. The upheaving power at the extremity of a lever acts coincidently with the motion of the central machine wheel."[3] Scientific experiments show how there are subtle powers mysteriously gener-

[2] Drummond, H., *Natural Law in the Spiritual World,* Intro., page 53.

[3] Benson, R. M., *Life Beyond the Grave,* Ch. LIV., Part III., p. 637.

ated, which, when complete, burst out with energy, filling the whole organism in which they were latent.

"So may we image forth the flash of glory, whereby the whole Body of Christ felt itself kindled with divine perfection."[4]

Might we not apply these words to the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in the Blessed Eucharist and other Sacraments?

"The lines of the spiritual," Drummond has said, "must have existed first; it is natural to expect that when the Unseen framed the material world he should go on the lines already laid down."[5] Looking as it were from the earthly side, he says elsewhere: "Men have considered theology too much as a thing apart . . . on lines altogether its own . . . nor is theology to be blamed . . . it had to wait the development of science. As the highest of the sciences, Theology, in the order of evolution, should be the last to fall into rank. It remains for it to perfect the final harmony."[6]

A reluctance to increase definitions in Theology may be based upon a wholesome fear of binding our faith to the latest expression in philosophy and natural science, as the veil is ever being lifted from deeper and yet deeper mysteries; but in so far as the reluctance has been owing to timidity—a fear of our inability to maintain the Catholic Faith—there is less excuse. Can the discoveries of scientific truth really be enemies to revealed truth?

We recognise the transformations of matter by force, the annihilation of space, and the mystery of ether—the very existence of which has only been surmised from its effects. We say that by this unknown substance an electric current is transmitted through a forest of other currents to find its goal on a prepared receiver. With these, and such like mysteries around

[4] Benson, R. M., *Life Beyond the Grave,* Ch. LIV., Part III., page 640.
[5] Drummond, H., *Nat. Law in Spir. World,* Intro. page 56.
[6] *Ibid.,* p. 17.

us, can anyone dare to apply the terms "magic" and "superstition" when, in simple acceptance of God's revealed word, Christians claim the outward and visible to be verily the means of imparting spiritual Being? Surely Faith is simply the power of sight, the seeing of that which *is*, but is hid from us by that which seems to be.

The translators' apology for writing at such length is that they have tried to show Landriot's teaching to be in harmony with that of many scientific minds in the present day. May we not yet find that even a deeper reason than analogy will bring natural science itself to be the companion and handmaid of the Catholic Faith. "Life is not a being but a becoming,"[7] truly "the visible is the ladder to the invisible, the temporal but the scaffolding of the eternal."[8]

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."[9]

The quotations from the Fathers, etc., in the body of the work were translated from the French of Monsignor Landriot, but the *references* have been verified as far as possible from English translations. Otherwise, the Latin or French originals are given.

The Oxford Library of the Fathers and T. T. Clark's Edin. Edit. of the Ancient Fathers in Eng. have been chiefly used; also the Translation of S. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, by the English Dominican Fathers. For more modern authors various English editions.

The Scripture references are to the Eng. Authorised Version, unless otherwise stated.

[7] Rolleston, *Parallel Paths*, Part I., Chap. I., p. 5; Ch. VI., pp. 153—160.
[8] Drummond, H., *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 57.
[9] 2 Cor. iv. 18.

INTRODUCTION.

ON THE NECESSITY OF MYSTERIES.

LECTURE I.

THERE is no doubt that Christianity, when studied seriously and impartially, has been recognised by enlightened and unprejudiced minds as *the* religion which is most in harmony with man's mixture of greatness and weakness, viewed in the light of his intellect, and the most generous aspirations of his heart.

Tertullian noticed this, and expressed it in a simple yet profound remark:—"The soul is naturally Christian,"[1] that is to say, all the noblest instincts of the soul are like seeds of Christianity slumbering in the depths of man's heart, only waiting the time when they should be quickened into life by contact with the word of truth.

Nevertheless do we not notice that by some strange contradiction men appear to be always taking precautions against the invasion of Christianity? Part of their existence is passed in erecting dykes against this ocean, which indeed wishes to submerge everything, but only in order to spread life and fertility. To the man of the world religion seems a kind of spectre pursuing him, and one might say man's main object is to find some quiet corner, where he may escape the pursuit and the questionings of this phantom. In vain the divine spectre raises his voice to say he is a friend, who only desires man's heart to fill it with happiness, man still flees; sometimes in his flight turning round to wear out by abuse the kindness and patience of his

[1] Tertullian, *Apol.*, Ch. XVII. "O testimony of a soul by nature Christian," Vol. X., p. 40, Ox. Edit.

loving and tender pursuer. Then man having repulsed the affectionate offers of his best friend, allows himself to be robbed by the first thief on the high road of life, that is to say, by one of the many passions which flatter his perverted inclinations.

Among the reasons given for refusing religion, is one which some think unanswerable, and which is firmly entrenched in many minds. "Religion," they say, "is an absurd mixture of incomprehensible things; a reasonable man only believes, and ought only to believe what he understands. We are really treated like children who accept without reasoning, and you imagine we can adopt any fable with a mysterious name which you choose to relate. This is absurd! Humanity has outgrown childhood, nations have reached manhood, and man is free, a period of enlightenment has dawned everywhere, and now reason is enthroned, and will no longer take seriously the card-castles which were built to amuse our ignorant forefathers. In short, away with Christianity! It is a religion of mystery, and incomprehensible dogmas. Man has grown up, and refuses milk, which no longer suits his strong constitution, and needs the solid nourishment of truth, but such truth as is clear, orderly, precise and perfectly intelligible." I do not think I have mis-stated this objection, I even confess that there is something attractive about it, because it finds root in a mistaken view of our true greatness. It flatters man's reason, which naturally loves light, and everything that flatters us, rightly or wrongly, attracts us, as recalling perhaps the lost glory of our primeval state. Yet I hope it will not be difficult to dissipate this objection which at first sight seems so formidable. We will establish the following propositions in order:

1. Mysteries, namely things which we do not understand, abound everywhere on earth.
2. Mysteries are relative to different degrees of intelligence: (That is to say, "What is clear to a higher intelligence is obscure to a lower, so that

what is a mystery to some people is not to others." Translator.)

3. Mysteries are an inseparable part of a Divine Religion.
4. Christian Mysteries are *above* reason, but not *contrary* to reason, and it is supremely reasonable to believe them.

If we unravel these four propositions, I think it will be seen that mysteries, so far from being an objection against Christianity, are even a proof of its Divine origin.

I.

Mystery exists everywhere, and the human mind cannot take one step without encountering it.[2] "Let us represent," said the most celebrated of Greek philosophers, "the state of human nature with regard to knowledge and ignorance, by a picture."[3] Plato then describes a deep cavern, receiving light by one large opening; in the entrance of this cavern men are chained with their faces turned towards its interior. Behind them is light, between their backs and the light all kinds of objects are walking about, and their shadows, thrown above the heads of the prisoners, are reflected in the depths of the cavern. The poor chained men talk to one another about the shadows, and they speak as if these were realities; they argue with the conviction that they possess the last word about the truth. Such is the state of our poor humanity, as stated by pagan philosophy; and so it is found by experience. Christianity has brought clearer and fuller lights, but the enigma of life remains the same. "We see through a glass darkly."[4] "We see by a mirror, in a riddle," is the Vulgate. Yes, the world is a cavern, light is behind us, and the pictures of objects are seen

[2] S. Augustine *on S. John.* Hom. I. No. 1, p. 3, Ox. Edit.
[3] Plato, *Republic,* Bk. VII. at the beginning.
[4] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

by us in a refracted light, or like the forms that quiver in an enchanter's crystal, according to another comparison of a Greek philosopher. And yet it is these poor captives called human beings, shut up in the prison cell called the body, who claim to know everything, to calculate by means of shadows, and to judge the cause of truth at their bar. Pitiable children! Do they even suspect that there exist, behind and above them, an infinite number of things of which they can scarcely form a picture, and which they can never really understand? Do they guess that the eternal light of which they believe themselves in a day-dream to be the sole possessors, has not even touched their eyelids? What is man, O my God? A being of a day, an atom lost in the ocean of eternity, a blind creature walking in darkness! What is man, that Thou shouldest deign to reply to his questions? O Lord, I admire this "masterpiece of Thy handiwork, this shadow of Thy Word," to use the thought of S. Athanasius; I admire him when he receives the light in the measure and under the form which Thou hast prepared for him in this world. Then he is strong, and great, his eyes shine, and his progress is grand in the spheres of Divine knowledge. But when he dares to overstep his boundary, he becomes like an eagle which has tried to absorb in its gaze all the sun's rays; and is struck with sudden blindness. Formerly man saw, it is true, only shadows of the truth, while awaiting the splendour of eternity; to-day men are blinded by pride and unbounded ambition.

O my God! If man were not created in Thy Image, if a ray of Thy glory, in spite of his fallen condition, did not shine on his head, he would often be the saddest and the most contradictory being in all creation. One, whose weakness is only equalled by his pretensions, narrow and warped in mind, like a tongue of land on which the sea encroaches with fearful rapidity. What matter! Human reason must know and understand everything! Puffed up and full of self,

man seems to say like Lucifer: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . . I will be like the Most High."[5]

Well, since this Reason, this king of thought knows all, let us question him, and ask him the solution of the enigmas which surround us; we shall be fortunate indeed to find a teacher who can explain all things. "Happy is he who recognises the cause of things," said the poet. We need not wander far, nor rise to higher regions, for the moment keep to bodily life and the world of matter. But since we are in the presence of a master who will allow no mysteries, who only believes that which he understands, we have the right to exact a clear and positive answer. . . . .

Look at this grain of sand, which we trample under foot, an atom blown by the wind. I want to know its nature, its essence, its *raison d'être*. You tell me it is composed of such and such elements, that it has a certain form and weight, but I go further. What is an element? What constitutes it? What is matter? What is substance? What is the hidden essence of this thing hidden under the appearances, which are called the phenomena, of the material world? I see these phenomena, I touch and feel them, but appearances are not the reasons of things, and it is these mysterious reasons that I ought to know, and if I do not know them, I ought, according to your principles, no longer to believe in all these phenomena which weary me. Come, reason, I question you in order to be enlightened. I have consulted the most famous schools, and they are dumb: I question you confidently: enlighten me. What? You hesitate! Do you repent already? Your answer dies upon your lips. Have you by chance met with a mystery? I begin to mistrust the success of your navigation, if the first rock to founder your boat is a grain of sand! But proceed further.

Plants breathe, animals multiply, life is propagated

[5] Isaiah xiv. 13, 14.

from one country to another, yet, while every being possesses life, philosophers are puzzled as to what life is. Light fills space, the hosts of heaven seem to move with the rapidity of thought yet as harmoniously as the chords of a lyre. Tell us, then, O reason, the secret of these marvels, compute the number of the stars, tell us how that milky Way, which traces a furrow in the heavens, comes to be formed of millions of fiery atoms, each of which is a burning sun. Let your thought follow the light in its flight, to explain its progress, and its movement, rapid as the wind. But no! you hesitate again, and the answer you stammer out is more mysterious than my question. In spite of my honest and kindly intention, it is impossible not to doubt your bold affirmations and pretensions to knowledge.

Or, Man, shall we turn to the consideration of your own being? I agree willingly, exercise your activity in the domain of your own nature, there at least you should reign with intelligence. Study that body so wonderfully formed, which bears upon it the immortal seal of a Divine artist. Tell us how movement is caused, how the blood circulates like a fertile river which flows and ebbs, ever over-running and fertilising the same lands. Tell us how the eye can see, the ear catch sounds, and the tongue make those marvellous intonations that we call human speech; how words, that is to say, air moved by the lips, can reveal to me the most sublime mysteries of Divine and human knowledge. What! Oh, princely intelligence, you cannot even stammer a reply! Then what becomes of your superb ignorance?

But let us penetrate further, you think; what is your thought? You dream; what are the dreams of your mind, your imagination, your heart? What about those feelings which rise to agitate you and which shake the dust of your body like the sunbeam stirring the dust in the air? What is that shadowy region called the heart of man? Tell us its mysteries, its enigmas, its con-

tradictions, its inexplicable storms, and the contrary winds which blow through it in every direction. Alas! I hear your sigh, and I understand your silence: you *don't* know your own self, and if there is one thing you are more powerless to explain than another it is the mystery of your own heart. You can only say truly with S. Augustine, "I do not understand myself, my mind is too narrow to hold itself. . . . I am an enigma to myself, an ungrateful soil upon which I expend useless culture."[6] "Thought is a mystery, speech is another and man himself a dark abyss," are the words of a celebrated philosopher.[7] I will cease then, since you cannot reply, O human reason, although I have still an infinite number of questions to put to you for, as the English poet has said: "There are more things in heaven and earth—than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

But you shall no longer be reduced to such a humiliating silence. Henceforward you may still be proud of yourself, of your force of mind, and of the power of your genius! But O man, I repeat, if you were *not* "a ray of God's glory," such a mixture of weakness and pride, pretension and ignorance, could deserve nothing but scorn.

It is an incontestable fact, recognised by all sensible men, and to deny which would give proof of a small mind, that the world and all it contains is a book sealed with seven seals. We can decipher some letters of the Divine Alphabet, but we shall never, at least on earth, penetrate its mysterious and hidden meaning: perhaps even in heaven man will not see unclouded truth. We can compare, analyse, and discuss, but for every serious and sincere mind, there will always be an insoluble problem at the bottom of every question. The infinite is in everything, even in a grain of sand; we understand nothing perfectly, not even the dust that we tread

[6] S. Augustine, *Conf.*, Bk. X., Ch. VIII. No. 15—Ch. XVI. No. 25. Edin. Edit.

[7] Balmès, *Pensées Diverses*, Vol. I., p. 390.

daily under our feet. We know neither how the eye sees, nor the ear hears, nor why the fire burns, nor how the stomach digests, or how life is propagated; nor why the plant rises from the soil, and seeks the light of the sun. The unknown lies in everything, and of nothing can we know the whole, as Montaigne says.

"God," says Holy Scripture, "hath set the world in their heart, yet so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning unto the end."[8] It is an eternal oracle whose meaning we have not the skill to interpret. A thick veil has been thrown over the universe, we see everything as in a mirror, and our soul, like a royal exile, is shut up in the body as in a high tower, from whence she perceives from afar the floating image of the truth. "I know," said a celebrated orator, "that truth, the unique object of my whole soul, is great as the Infinite, and that as the Infinite can only be contained by its equal, that is, by itself alone, it is natural that I cannot plumb the depths of any truth."[9]

The mathematical sciences themselves have their mysteries and there comes a moment when numbers, straight lines and curves extend into infinitude, and escape the most searching investigation. Yet who has not heard it said that the exact sciences are positive, an end in themselves, perfectly intelligible, and clear as water from a rock? Yes, they are clear on the surface, but when the mind dives and plunges, it reaches dark abysses, and is obliged, in order not to be lost, to rise panting to the surface. Ask wise men, philosophers, those who are considered master minds, ask them if they do not often find the high regions they explore become airless. They all complain of bounds to their most ardent longings: sometimes they seem on the point of discovering a whole mass of truth, and they begin to thrill like the mountain shepherd who catches the first glimmer of the morning

[8] Eccles. iii. 11.

[9] Lacordaire, *Conférences.* Conf. 57, on mystery, p. 17.

star, but suddenly darkness returns, a thick cloud has blotted out the star; they, too, are obliged to give up these perilous ascents, and remember that they are but men. Hence that deep feeling of sadness which so often accompanies study, because it leaves a void in the mind and heart; in the mind which desires to see all; and in the heart which craves to hold divine truth, the object of all its desires. Hence, too, the poet's cry of distress: "Truth is a precious stone at the bottom of a well."[10] "There are," says an unsuspected philosopher, "primitive phenomena, which are irreducible in their divine simplicity, and which we must leave to faith."[11]

"Philosophy," cries Lamennais, "leaves the mystery of all existence, the impenetrable secret of the infinite, to subsist hidden at the heart of all that is."[12]

The result of these undeniable principles, which are admitted by all men of any intellectual worth, is, according to Pascal, that truly wise men have attained to nothing more than a learned ignorance,[13] and that it is natural to a superior mind to confess this ignorance, to own that man understands nothing perfectly, and meets with mystery everywhere, in the dust he despises, and the star which he contemplates.[14] What strength we gain from these principles, when we have to answer those presumptuous minds, that will not admit religion, as they say, because religion contains mysteries; as if the confession and recognition of mystery were not the alphabet of true philosophy! Have you not met those talkers who have no doubts, and are ready to explain and understand everything? You may be sure that the measure of their pride is the measure of their ignorance.

[10] Byron, *Childe Harold,* Ch. III., S. 93.
[11] Goethe, V., *Preface to the translation of Faust,* Edit. Charpentier,
[12] Lamennais, *Esquisses de Phil.,* t. 1, pp. 21, 22.
[13] Pascal, *Pensées,* t. 1, p. 180.
[14] Goethe, *Maxims,* Vol. I., "The man that can recognise the limits of his own mind is the nearest to perfection," p. 504.

II.

Mysteries as such are relative also to different degrees of intelligence and to different conditions of the soul.

To understand this proposition, it is necessary to define truth. God *is* the living and substantial truth, complete, absolute and without shadow. He alone possesses Truth in its entirety because He alone has the full enjoyment of His own Divine Being. Proceeding from God are fragments, glimpses of truth, which radiate from the eternal sanctuary, as light emanates from its centre. Consider the light of the sun; it issues forth pure and brilliant, but in contact with matter, it is divided and decomposed, and no longer appears to us in its first and purest form, it is weaker and discoloured. So is it with truth. It issues forth from God, its centre, its source; then it shines upon diverse intelligences, but in a fragmentary state, always more or less analysed, more or less interspersed with shadows.[15] [16] From this we gather that there are not, and could not be, mysteries for the All-Knowing God. From the depths of His Eternity, He gazes tranquilly upon His own Divine Being, and upon all creation. He sees all the depths of existence, and the play of their interchanging relations, everything is naked and open to His eyes; shadows disappear before Him as clouds before the sunbeams; for God makes light by His presence. To God, the most complicated problems, the most difficult solutions, and the most impenetrable mysteries are distinct and clear.

He sees all clearly—with one clear gaze into the most profound mysteries He sees the whole—and this gaze is far more intense than the intellectual light which teaches man the value of one unity added to another unity. This clear vision, this penetration of

[15] S. Thom. Aq., *Opus 28. de Fato.* Ch. II., v. III., p. 158.

[16] Philon, *De Migr Abrah.* Ch. XXIV. Edit. Leipsick. The first limit of science is to recognise its own ignorance.

all things by the Infinite, is in God not the result of calculation and reasoning, but of a simple glance. He looks, and wherever this all-seeing Look rests, nothing more remains to be seen. "Only God," says a philosopher, "can conceive things as fully as they can be conceived."[17]

But as soon as we leave the threshold of eternity and re-enter the sphere of created intelligence, truth is no longer as pure, no longer as complete, shadows appear, for shadow is nothing else but the limit of truth, when it is no longer embraced by infinity. With shade comes mystery, for mystery is infinite truth which shade limits to our intelligence. Thus, the Seraphim nearest to God, he who is most inundated with love and light, meets, as he soars, a sphere which he cannot pass; he reaches an abyss of light, and a voice issuing forth from it cries—"Thus thou shalt go and no further." Below the Seraphim are inferior Angels, where shadows increase, and grow longer as at evening on the mountain-side. Angels placed on the lowest steps of the Throne of God receive truth more darkly, more mysteriously, and they see only behind a cloud what the Cherubim contemplate in pure splendour.

At length we arrive at man; man, that mixture of earth and spirit, created in the image of God, yet cleaving to the dust. In this terrestrial sphere truth undergoes a new transformation; it becomes still less pure, less complete, and more material. Generally speaking, truth comes to man by the intermediary of the senses, and in passing through these organs of the body, we may say that it absorbs something of their weight and opaqueness. This makes ardent souls sigh and long, hardly able to bear the weight of the body, because the flesh is like a thick veil between them and truth. Man is straitened by the bands of the body, he regards them as the swaddling clothes of infancy, his energetic spirit desires to break through. He is like a prisoner

[17] Buffier, *Traité des premières vérités*, Part II., Ch. XII.

in a dungeon, sighing for pure light, but it only comes to him through the bars of a small window.

O Truth, heavenly light, life of my soul, nourishment of my heart, Thou towards whom my whole being reaches forth at dawn of day; to Thee my heart, at night, tired out with creatures, turns as to a bed of rest! Who will give me the wings of a dove, to raise me above the deserts of this world, to enjoy Thy vision, if not complete, at least calm and pure, as we enjoy the sun in winter on the top of a mountain, while the base is lost in damp fog?

Truth, then, varies in its manifestations, it exists in a more or less pure form as we descend from the throne of God and arrive at human nature. But see what a difference there is also when we come to humanity itself. Among men, what a difference we see in their power to discern truth! What differences in aptitude and intelligence! Whatever the cause may be, whether it proceeds from organic constitution, educational development, or the concurrence of outward circumstances independently of the human will, it is undeniable that there are minds more subtle than others, with greater capacity and wider genius.[18] There are men who see better and further than others. There are those who, like the eagle, take in at one glance an immense horizon, and others whose view is limited to a few yards. A philosopher has said: "For the knowledge of truth there exists a natural and spontaneous aristocracy, who by the union of natural facilities and education, are the élite and intellectual flower of the human race."[19] This natural hierarchy of mind results in mysteries becoming relative, that is to say, what is a mystery to one, is not so to another. We can picture all created minds as placed on the different degrees of a live ladder between heaven and earth: each is more or less elevated, and according to its elevation, sees further, has a larger circle of ideas,

[18] S. Dionys. areop. *De eccl.: Hier:* Ch. VIII (the end).
[19] Gioberti, *Intro. à la phil.*, t. II., p. 322.

dominates more fragments of the truth, and in consequence sees clearly that which remains a mystery to minds on a lower plane.

A few examples will illustrate this thought. I tell a man who has never opened a book, that the earth revolves without our consciousness, that its movement is more rapid than that of a railway train; that the stars which seem so small, are really larger than the moon, the earth or even the sun; it is evident that all these propositions are so many mysteries to him. I go further: I state seriously to this uncultivated mind that colour does not exist in bodies; he may laugh in my face. I tell him solemnly that the three angles of a triangle are equivalent to two right angles, which is one of the first principles of geometry, and he will ask if I am talking Hebrew! And yet, to any man who has the most superficial knowledge of mathematics, these propositions are evident and clearly proved, they are not more mysterious than the infinite aspect which is inherent in everything. It is true, but the intelligence to which I appealed, was on a degree of the ladder inferior to the perception of these truths, and in order to remove the mystery, one needed to raise the intelligence to a higher degree.

Suppose now that this man who is ignorant of all scientific development, instead of confessing his ignorance gave himself airs, and derided these propositions, that he cannot understand, what would the learned world say? Would not laughter be the only reply to his pride and folly?

May it not be that a wisdom far superior to our own, that is to say, that of God, and of the Angels, must have often cause to smile at those ignorant wise men, as Pascal calls them, who turn to mockery that which they do not understand in Divine matters?

To sum up the foregoing: mysteries are entirely relative to us, there are none absolutely so, since in God all is light and knowledge. Mysteries, even in the natural order, exist for all created minds, but they are

greater or less according to the height that each mind has attained on the mountain which leads to the temple of Truth itself. Each mind conceives more or less perfectly, better than the mind of inferior degree, and less well than the mind which occupies a higher position.

There are also mysteries connected with different states of positions in life; of which our ordinary life will furnish many examples. You perform a certain action, your intention is excellent, but hidden, no one knows it! The result of this may be that your action is a mystery to those around you, however clear to yourself. We should think anyone perfectly absurd who tried to judge our action without understanding its motive. We say quite truly that when people do not know the reason for an action, they must abstain from judging and condemning the doer; and those who do not follow this rule are unreasonable. Here, then, is something which is a mystery to my neighbour, but an evident truth to myself: it is a relative mystery. Take the father of a young family, who has many children: if they try to judge him from their inexperienced point of view, how many things must seem to them inexplicable in his behaviour; some day, it is true, they may recognise its deep wisdom, but to-day it is a mystery for them, and, nevertheless, if they are sensible and submissive, they ought to trust him, although they do not always understand. He sees the reasons for his actions, his children must believe in the mysteries of his paternal authority.

We see how everything corresponds in the logic of ideas. It has been said to the people: "You shall believe nothing in Divine things except what you understand." The people have applied this principle, and they have added: "For still greater reasons, I shall not believe those who govern me about anything, unless I always see the wisdom of their actions." This second principle is false like the first, but it follows from it.

So must there be mysteries in connection with our state of pilgrimage upon earth. . . . Though children of light, the day of our Epiphany has not yet fully dawned. Let us wait with patience, for patience is the great science of life. Some day, "When we shall be like God,"[20] when we are clad with light as with a garment, and lost in the splendours of Divine glory, many things, now obscure, will be revealed to us, and the ecstasy of love will follow this revelation. Oh! how blessed it will then be to live by truth, as the eye lives by light! How good to bathe in the immense river of truth, and to be refreshed as one weary. How many mysteries which seem to contradict reason, and to accuse the goodness of God, will then appear to us masterpieces of wisdom and mercy. In heaven we shall smile at the remembrance of those thoughts which wearied us below, just as manhood laughs at childhood's ideas, or as on waking, we shake off the dreams of night.

Even Pagan philosophers understand this truth: "The wisdom which we pursue with love," says Plato, "will not be ours until we are made perfect, that is to say, dead."[21] "Wisdom is given to the dead and not to the living."[22]

Let us then live in the patience of humility, let us learn how to resign ourselves to a provisional ignorance, like the child who begins the study of science under a clever master. We shall make daily progress, if we study Christianity, we shall find it ever more and more marvellously beautiful; but the true light will not be seen until having read and closed the incomplete volume of this life, we behold a new light dawn on the heights of another world. Do not let us try any other method, we shall only be led to an abyss. Do not

[20] 1 Epis. S. John iii. 2.

[21] According to the force of the Greek word, which means both to finish, to bring to perfection, and to die, for even ancient philosophy understood that death was the perfection, the completion of man.

[22] Plato, *Phædo*, p. 51.

wish to be wiser or more enlightened than the Church. "The Catholic Church itself," says S. Gregory the Great, "has not the presumption to penetrate into secrets which are above her. She judges it better to ignore that which she cannot find out, than to make bold decisions on those things of which she is ignorant."[23]

S. Augustine has made a profound remark, when commenting on the sublime opening words of the Gospel of S. John. "The Apostle," he cries, "has not said all, he has said what he could, but it was a man who spoke. He was a man inspired, and that is why he has said something, but he was man, and he has not said everything."[24]

All is not said, then, even in Holy Scripture. "That which is written suffices absolutely as nourishment in exile, but there is more, there are other marvels, there are other heavens, another earth, and other and fuller truths."[25] "The Apostles, themselves," says S. Thomas Aquinas, "could not bear the weight of these glorious revelations. How much more should not we be overwhelmed, by vivid and premature light?"[26]

Such are the truths preliminary to the question which we have undertaken to treat, namely, the reasonableness of our assent to the mysteries of Christianity. In order to clear our horizon, and to prepare the way for a clearer perception of truth, it was necessary to demonstrate the natural weakness of our mind; in order to establish the inaccessible depths of infinite knowledge, it was necessary to begin by fixing the limits of our own minds; limits bounded not only by religion, but by the nature of things, and by our qualities as creatures. To show that we are all vessels more or less narrow, is to prove that we cannot hold the ocean!

[23] S. Greg. the Great, *Morals on B. of Job,* Vol. I., Bk. XIV., Ch. XXVIII.
[24] S. Aug. *on S. John,* Tr. I., Ch. I., par. 1.
[25] Origen, t. XII., *on S. John.*
[26] S. Thom. Aq., *on John,* Ch. XVI., Vol. III., p. 723.

LECTURE II.

1 Tim. vi. 16.

HARD by the ancient monuments of Egypt, was to be seen the image of a fabulous monster called the sphinx; it was the emblem of mystery, and the symbol of hidden things. At the entrance of cities old as the world itself, stand majestically a double row of these mythological beings; they were sculptured in gigantic stone blocks, and seemed by their silence to propose enigmas to the passers-by. Alas, only too true a picture of human life and the ways of science! The sphinx exists everywhere on earth; we cannot take a step without meeting many standing erect before us, multiplying questions to which we cannot answer. They not only form a double hedge around us, they surround us like the dust of the fields raised by the whirlwind. Above our heads, at our side, at our feet, to the right and the left, nay more, the fabulous animal is seated in our innermost soul, he interrogates us about ourselves, and seems to ask ironical questions which remain unanswered.

Now a serious examination of truth has forced us to the conclusion that man understands nothing perfectly, not even a grain of sand. Mystery is every where in this world; it bathes all the shores of creation, from an atom of dust to the stars in heaven which defy our vain researches, from the intimate nature of man, to the intellectual regions of pure science. "It is not necessary to go very far," says S. Augustine, "to find the limits of our knowledge; no one can even account for common things."[1]

So also an ancient philosopher says, "I learn every day that I know nothing," and it follows that every man whose thought is of any value, owns his ignorance.

There is, then, necessarily, a mysterious aspect in

[1] S. Aug., *Serm. 247*, Vol. V.

every created thing; this aspect is the point which touches on the infinite, and this side of creation will ever remain dark for man. Man is a traveller climbing a mountain; he discovers a greater or less extent of country according as his position is higher or lower. Finally, man, according to the Apostle's thought, is in a state of infancy here below,[2] maturity will only be reached in heaven. This life is a veil between us and the truth; and at the hour of death the veil will be lifted; for death, according to Plato's fine remark, and the etymology of the Greek language, is the completion of man.[3]

These considerations sum up the last instruction. Let us now go further, and prove that mystery is to be found still more in religious questions, and that these mysteries of religion are above reason without being contrary to it, and that man often acts most reasonably in believing without understanding.

I.

Does religion necessarily contain mysteries? Such a question seriously asked would prove that the person asking shows want of reflection on the most elementary conditions of life.

The higher you ascend a mountain, the purer becomes the air, and the more soft and beautiful is the light. But beyond a certain region, breathing becomes difficult, our strength lessens, and the climber experiences feelings of weakness and languor which he cannot define. So is it with human science; when the mind first ascends, it seems inspired with new life; borne on the wings of genius, it darts up impetuously towards the light, but beyond a certain limit, inspiration lessens, and the effort is more difficult, thought meets difficulties that check its power and arrest its progress seemingly on the very borders of the infinite.

This law of our intellectual being prevails even in

[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

[3] Plato's *Republic*, Ch. VII., p. 533. Also in *Phædo*, p. 264.

the simplest questions, we have proved it. . . . Ought we to draw the same conclusions with regard to Divine problems? To put this question is to ask whether the insect, which falls heavily when it even attempts to raise itself a few feet from the earth, could not mount towards the sky itself? Leibnitz said to the unbelievers of his day: "You have only known the world for three days, and you find something amiss with it, though you can see no further than your nose!"[4] Can we not say, even more justly than Leibnitz, to those who will not admit mysteries in Divine things—what! You have not even known eternity for a day, and you already find something amiss with it! Truly we may say with Montaigne, "There is no greater folly in this world."[5] "Presumption is our natural and original disease," continues this philosopher. "Man is the most unfortunate and the weakest of all creatures in some respects, but above all the proudest. He knows that he is placed here in the mire of this world, fastened and nailed to the lowest part of the universe, his dwelling-place, the farthest from the heavenly habitation, and with animals whose lower condition he shares, and yet he goes soaring in imagination above the circle of the moon, and thinks to bring heaven under his feet."[6]

. . . . . .

Does mystery exist, can it, ought it to exist? Job asked God this question one day, and the Lord replied: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man and answer Me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding. . . . When the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. . . . Hast thou commanded the morning . . . that it might take hold of

[4] Leibnitz, *Essays on the Goodness of God,* 2nd Pt., No. 194, Edit. de Berlin.
[5] Montaigne, *Essays,* Vol. I., Ch. XXVI.
[6] *Ibid.,* Vol. II., Ch. XII., Edit. Charpentier.

the ends of the earth . . . that the wicked might be shaken out of it. . . Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea . . . have the gates of death been opened unto thee . . .?"[7] "Shall he that contendeth with the Lord instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it!"[8]

Thus the human soul traverses the world, but stops frightened on the borders of the infinite; she hears the roaring waves of eternity, and the divine billows repulse her. Moses said once to God: "Lord, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." "I will make all My goodness to pass before thee," said God, "thou canst not see My Face and live. . . While My glory passeth by . . . I will cover thee with My hand . . . and thou shalt see My back parts, but My Face shall not be seen."[9] Thus we see how God holds back the secret of His Nature, and of all that concerns His attributes. He willingly showers His abundant blessings on His servant, but to show Himself in His glory, and to reveal the mysteries of His Divine Essence! Nay, He declares positively, He will never consent to do that, at least in this world of illusions and darkness. In heaven itself, God will not manifest Himself to us by the revelation of all His Divine Mysteries; He could not even if He willed to do so, because God is only perfectly intelligible to Himself, and His Infinite Mind only can embrace that which has no limitations. God will be for all eternity, to every created being, an infinite sphere of light in which we may lose ourselves, and yet ever believe ourselves at the same point; and still there will ever exist unknown regions before us.

"Ye reserve nothing for God,"[10] is a sublime saying, which as in a flash explains the grandeur and the folly

[7] Job xxxviii. 2, 3—12, 13, 16, 17.
[8] *Ibid.*, xl. 2, 3.
[9] Exodus xxxiii. 18—23.
[10] S. Irenæus, *Against Heresies,* Bk. II., Ch. XXVIII., No. 4. Edin. Edit., p. 223.

of our pretensions. Jealous of our own independence and of our liberty, we shut up our heart's secrets and feelings in that inaccessible retreat; we declare loudly that the sanctuary of our inmost thought is inviolable. And after such an absolute use of our liberty, such a solemn consecration of our independence, we will not allow the same privilege to God. "We even dare to summon God before our tribunal to answer for His thoughts and His works,"[11] exclaims S. Chrysostom. "O depth of human folly! You who question the Lord with such audacious insolence, in a way which might almost be called outrageous, and who would know the why and the wherefore of all that He does, what would you say to your servant,[12] if every morning he should ask you to give an account of your intentions and plans? If he should wish to know the motives which guide your administration, and your actions? Why you go to the country to-day, and to-morrow remain in town? Why you sell this house, and buy that *objet de luxe?* What would you say if he asked you all these questions with the same bold liberty that you employ in your dealings with God? Do you think yourself greater than God, since you allow yourself to do with Him what you would not suffer on the part of one of your servants?" "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket."[13] "And thou who dost reason against God," cries S. Chrysostom, "what place dost thou occupy in this drop?[14] Oh! the millionth part of a drop, thou wouldst be wiser to hide thyself in the silence of thy nothingness!"

But still I hear the complaint—Why does not God reveal to us these mysteries? Why does He always leave us in darkness? To begin with I might reply: I know nothing about it, and I glory in my ignorance:

[11] S. Chrys., *Eclogue* 10. *De Prov.*, Vol. XII. *Ibid.* Epis. to Cor. vi. 14. Hom. XVII. 3. p. 229. Ox. Edit.
[12] S. Chrys., *on Ep. to Ephes.*, Hom. XIX., p. 309. Ox. Edit.
[13] Isaiah xl. 15.
[14] S. Chrys., *de incompreh. Dei nat.*, Serm. 2, No. 4.

because in Divine things it is great knowledge to confess our want of knowledge.[15] Still such is the condescension of the Lord, that He wills to descend to us, and to answer our questions. But God, even though He were willing to do so could not cause mysteries to disappear. That is, He could not give unlimited light to our minds. "It is neither by caprice nor by choice," says the poet, "that God holds all things hidden, but by necessity."[16]

God could at the most draw back the boundaries of mystery, but when we had arrived at this boundary, the same objection would present itself. God Himself cannot make the finite able to embrace the infinite, that is an absolute impossibility. "The Divinity of God," says S. Thomas, "is dark by reason of too much brightness."[17] This saying appears contradictory, yet it is one of the primary truths of the intellectual world:[18] too much light produces darkness. When our eyes have been fixed upon the sun, we can see nothing else, and yet it is not light that is wanting. S. Augustine was walking one day by the seashore, and his mind was occupied in searching into the depths of the august Trinity. He noticed a young child who was drawing water from the sea, in a little pitcher, in order to fill a small hole dug in the sand. "My child," said S. Augustine "what are you trying to do?" "I am trying to pour all the sea into this hole." S. Augustine could not help smiling at his simplicity: "You think," said the child, "that I shall not succeed; but you may be sure that I shall enclose the ocean in this narrow bed, before you will have understood the Trinity."

Alas! how many Augustines are there walking

[15] S. Cyril, *Catechetical Lectures*, No. VI., Par. II. Ox. Edit.

[16] Dante, *Paradiso. Canto* XV. ". . . things
I understood not, so profound he spake;
Yet not of choice but thro' necessity
Mysterious: for his high conception soared
Beyond the mark of mortals."

[17] S. Thom. Aq., *In Lib de Div. Nom.*, Bk. III., Ch.I.

[18] "Close thine eyes, and thou wilt see." Joubert, tr. I.

beside the tossing sea of this world, who are seeking to understand truth completely. Let them listen to this story, for there is a greater distance between the Divine Intelligence and their mind, than between the ocean and the smallest bucket.

The nature of Divine Truth is, then, the first reason for mysteries: the second is our ignorance of the *whole* plan of the Divine works.[19]

A thing which is perfect as a *whole,* may seem ridiculous and absurd if you isolate it. He who does not perceive the whole, finds mystery and contradiction where really the greatest harmony exists. Cut off a man's head, it is a horrible sight; and yet, a few hours ago, that head joined to the rest of the body was a masterpiece of physiognomy and moral beauty. Look at a picture by Raphael; if you take one face separate from the rest, it may perhaps appear to you insignificant, when not in relation with anything else. Yet such is our habitual position in the midst of the works of God, and questions of religion; we only see a small part of the whole, and we must naturally find anomalies.

"In a poem," says S. Augustine, "the beauty does not exist in each syllable, nor in each verse, but in the feeling of the whole work."[20] You have read no doubt in your lives verses, a tragedy, or at least some prose work. Have you thought of judging the whole work after reading a few lines or one verse? We should think it foolish to do so. But, is it not done daily with regard to God's works? Creation is an immense poem, the first thought of which is love, and of which

[19] God made the universe beautiful, harmonious and complete; He has made a happy agreement between the important and the insignificant parts. He who would find fault with the whole while only considering the parts, is, therefore, unjust. He is like one, who instead of considering the fine sight that man presents as a whole, only looks at a hair or a toe; who among animals, only examines the lowest, and judges the human race by a Thersite. (Note. Plotinus, 3rd Ennéade.)

[20] S. Aug., *de Musica,* Bk. VI., No. 3, Vol. I., p. 860.

the last will also be love. We scarcely know one verse of this magnificent epic, for a century equals a line of the Divine poem; we have read one syllable, and we attempt to draw a conclusion! The Saints knew better, they had the soul's true knowledge; they waited with patience, and with their eyes fixed on heaven, they believed in the wisdom and perfection of the Infinite Poet. Leave then these fragments which seem to you defective; Homer and Virgil would not have been thought great poets, under such a system of criticism. In order to judge works of art and science, one must be raised to a certain altitude. "A man hidden in a little corner of a splendid palace," says S. Augustine again, "could not judge of the magnificence of the building. A soldier in the ranks cannot judge of the fine order in the army."[21] Only realise your unsuitable position, and await a better one before judging.[22] A soldier takes part in a battle; but lost in the ranks, stifled with smoke, or under the horses' feet, can he judge the plan of the fight, the wisdom of the orders given, or the skilfulness of the generals? We will extend S. Augustine's thought by supposing that we are on a height, a wide plain below, and on this plain are drawn up two armies—one army especially is commanded by a very skilful general, Cæsar, Alexander or Napoleon. Suddenly we see the troops execute a movement which we do not understand, and which seems to us a capital blunder. We turn to our companion, and say, "Has the general lost his senses?" The answer is: "Wait, do not be in a hurry to judge; you do not know the general's motives, or even guess his plan of campaign; you do not know whether a movement of the enemy may not have necessitated a countermarch!" We repeat again the words of Leibnitz: "You cannot see farther than your own

[21] S. Aug., *de Musica*, Bk. VI., No. 3, Vol. I.

[22] God is not so poor as to work such things only as can be apprehended by thy weak reasoning: S. Chrys. *on 1st Ep. to Cor.*, Hom. XVII., p. 229. Ox. Edit.

nose, and yet you would find fault and blame." Do we yet feel the force of this comparison? We are always wishing to criticise God's plan of campaign, in His great work of Creation and Redemption, but do we really know all His plan? If we do not know it, how can we judge it? In human questions, would not such presumption be called folly? And yet the general, however skilful he may be, is at least liable to make a mistake, while the Infinite wisdom of God is a guarantee for the perfection and beauty of His work.

De Maistre points out a third reason for mystery in religious questions. "If God," he says, "has placed certain objects beyond the boundaries of our vision, it is doubtless because it was dangerous for us to see them distinctly."[23] It is what a Father of the Church calls "medicinal ignorance."[24] Who can explain how much foreseeing goodness there is in the wisdom of God, when He withdraws certain things from our sight? Who can express the tenderness of a mother when she hides objects which her children might misuse?

But do not let us attempt to sound this abyss of mercy;[25] there are secret words, "Which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Let us be satisfied to sing "the Mercy of God is over all His works."[26] The Heart of God has a mother's instincts; all the Saints assure us of it. "There are things difficult to understand," exclaims S. Chrysostom, "but I await the end as the workman awaits the melting of gold in the furnace; as the labourer awaits summer and autumn. I await the end, and I know that the love of God is greater than that of all mothers."[27]

Again, the disappearance of mystery, as far as man

[23] De Maistre, *Soirées.* 10th Entret.

[24] Didymus Alexand., *De Trinit.*, Bk. III., Ch. XXII.

[25] "God," says S. J. Damascene, "has only revealed that which can be useful to us; He has hidden from us what we could not bear." *On Faith,* Tr. I., Bk. I., Ch. I.

[26] Ps. cxlv.

[27] S. Chrys., *Ad eos qui scandal.*, Vol. III., p. 577.

could see, would also bring a great evil, it would destroy the moral liberty of intelligent beings. Do you not see that if man were to behold Truth face to face, he would be overcome by love? Human passions even sometimes produce this result; but what are they compared with the sweetest, but the most violent of all transports, that of Truth, unveiled, seen, and contemplated without hindrance. If the Lord were to open heaven, and allow one ray only of His Glory to escape, you would be free no longer, you would be unable *not* to love God. Your heart would be torn away in spite of yourself, it would fling itself towards Infinite Goodness more rapidly than a stone falls into an abyss. The cessation of mystery through too much light, would take away our liberty, our free will, and, consequently, our merit. Here below, the Lord, because He wills to make us beings capable of meriting our happiness, has placed a cloud between us and the Truth. This cloud has a light, but also a dark side; man can choose, and this choice gives his actions their moral value. Besides, faith itself is even more an act of the will than of the intelligence. Faith is a virtue, and virtue pre-supposes struggle, but there is no struggle where the victor overwhelms us without a fight.[28]

Yes: our religion *is* full of mysteries. It is true, we say it proudly, that is what we profess it to be!

But besides all this our minds are not so far removed from mystery as some might think. "There is a mysterious charm and perfume of the infinite in that which is secret,"[29] says Humboldt. "There is nothing beautiful, sweet and great in life, but that which contains mystery." Think of the secret charm that mystery offers to the mind and heart. An undefined horizon attracts us, as thought goes beyond; we love to walk in a thick forest, where the aspect changes at every turn, and we expect something behind every

[28] Lacordaire, *Conf. 49, "On God,"* Ch. V., pp. 19, 20.
[29] Humboldt, *Cosmos,* II., p. 38.

branch and leaf that moves. We love to feel ourselves rocked on the ocean wave; the infinite above us and mysterious depths below. Truly the more we examine human nature in its least details, the more we recall that saying of Bossuet: "We shall never attain even to our own ideas, for God has taken care to mingle His Infinity with them."[30] The love of mystery is, then, a proof of our greatness; it is the instinct of a being who is never satisfied with the positive, because he touches the infinite, under the phenomena of this world. Now God knows this powerful longing in our souls. He has left mystery here below; because He knew that man, the finite creature, who nevertheless has something infinite in his being, would feel every hour of his existence the need of adoring the infinite under the passing forms of creation. For mystery is the natural nourishment of a being formed in the image of God, and created for God.[31] If there were no mysteries we should all be like God, which is speaking blasphemy; or else we should descend to the ranks of the animals without reason, for whom there are no mysteries, because they understand nothing. The Lord knew, however, better than we do, the laws of our nature, when He left mystery in our existence, like a wave to lift us up each instant and bring us nearer the infinite. "The mysterious meaning in everything is the most beautiful part."[32]

"It is both man's trial and his need to feel himself surrounded by mysteries. He feels that he is not self-sufficient. He thirsts for something greater than himself and in spite of his many conquests he will always feel small in the presence of the great unknown forces.

[30] Bossuet, quoted by P. Gratry, Logic, tr. II.

[31] "There is no beauty without mysteries, where the unknown does not enter there is disenchantment, weariness and boredom. Such is the alarming prodigy of science: it profanes that which it touches." Mgr. Baudry, *The Heart of Jesus,* 2nd Part, No. 12.

[32] Joubert, Vol. I., p. 149. See same thought, Seneca, *Epis. 95,* Vol. IV., p. 126, édit. Lemaire.

If his mind could bring everything to the test of his comprehension; if there were nothing to make him feel insignificant, he could not exist. A world worth nothing more than his present feeble existence, would disgust him." . . . "Therefore progress does not consist in destroying mystery, but in ennobling it; not in exhausting, but in investigating it. Each fresh acquisition of knowledge only drives back the problem without removing it, and only dissipates one mystery, to allow us to behold a greater one; more worthy of our worship, before which we may rejoice in feeling confounded."[33]

II.

When we say that a thing is *above* reason, we are not asserting that it is *contrary* to reason; this distinction is very essential.

A thing is contrary to reason, when it is known on all sides to oppose and shock some incontestable principles admitted by reason. Now, as S. Thomas Aquinas remarks, since reason comes from God, it follows that a thing really contrary to reason would be absurd, and would merit no belief.[34] But for a thing to be declared really contrary to reason, it is absolutely necessary that the elements which compose it, and which we are called upon to judge, should be thoroughly known. Otherwise, their incompatibility with reason could not be pronounced. For example, if anyone were to say that two and two made five, we should answer: that is impossible and absurd, because we know enough about the units contained in the figures two and four, to know that two and two make four, and will never make five.

On the other hand, a thing is above reason, when without contravening reason, it goes beyond and escapes its relative explanations. In this case, reason cannot say that there is an absurd reversal of ordinary

[33] Tonnelle, *Fragments sur l'art et la philos.*, p. 339.
[34] S. Thom. Aq., *Cont. Gent.* Bk. I., Ch. VII.

ideas, if it does not know all or perhaps even one of the terms of the proposition perfectly. If we put a geometrical theorem before a man who does not know mathematics, it will certainly be above his reasoning powers, it may be impossible for him even to grasp the sense of our words. Should we say that the geometrical proposition is absurd and contrary to reason, because it is above the reason of this illiterate man? And yet is not this what we do daily, when we seriously affirm that the mysteries of religion are absurd and contrary to reason, because they are above our poor pitiful reason? "I am astonished," said Leibnitz, "that there should be intellectual people who dispute this distinction, which is so well grounded, between things *above* and things *contrary* to reason."[35]

Are there here below things which are above reason, without being contrary to it? In other words, are there things that we do not understand perfectly? For from the moment that our reason does not grasp or understand a thing, is not that thing in a sense above reason? We have already answered that question by proving that the universe is full of mysteries. When an object is above our height, our hand cannot reach it; but we do not, therefore, conclude that the height of this object is absurd, we only say truly that our height is inferior to that of the object. (Thus I may raise and extend my hand in vain, I cannot touch the vaulted roof of this cathedral, but the only reasonable conclusion I can draw is that my hand is not long enough: if I began to contest the height of the vaulting, because it will not come in contact with my hand, you might doubt my sense.) Let us have the same common-sense in spiritual matters; if we are confronted by a proposition otherwise proved, but above our reason, do not let us call it false, let us simply conclude that we are spiritual dwarfs, in such an avowal there is both frankness and truth! Let us apply this principle to the mysteries of our religion.

[35] Leibnitz, *Théodicée*, No. 23, p. 486.

The proposition, the stars are above our heads, is an evident one. But this other proposition, Divine mysteries are above reason, is still more evident, for certainly there is more distance between Divine mysteries and our reason, than between the earth and the sky.

Therefore the mind of man is radically powerless to declare incompatibility between Divine mysteries and reason. If he dares to do so, he is like a man born blind talking about colours.

Thus in order to assert that there is absurdity in the mystery of the Trinity, it would be necessary to know at the same time both the essence of the Divine Nature, and the manner of the relation which is called Divine Persons; then only would it be possible to prove that the same Divine stalk cannot blossom into those three magnificent flowers that theology names the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In order to assert that the mystery of the Eucharist is absurd, it would be necessary to have clear and precise views on the nature of matter, and especially of glorified matter, and then on the manner in which our Lord is present in the Eucharist: but neither philosophy nor physics can tell us what matter *is,* or what substance is, or what matter is when reduced to a state of electric and luminous fluid. To-day you are far from knowing the entire power of that subtle matter called electricity: you already know that with its help we can cover the entire globe at the same instant with the power of our ideas, and we certainly do not know what gigantic developments of the power of matter the future may hold, through the breathing of man's genius. And yet you dare to refuse the Son of God, Who is the Thought of the Father, a power which the thought of man exercises daily! When then we affirm that such a mystery of Christianity is absurd because we do not understand it, we are like a judge who pronounces sentence without having even read over the terms of the procedure, or like the illiterate man who says "that

geometrical proposition is absurd because I do not understand it."[36] The answer might be given: wait, do nothing in a hurry, examine seriously, what seems an absurdity may even be a fact where you least expect it.

I foresee another objection! What motive have we for believing in mysteries? Our reason should at least remain indifferent to them, as the reason of most men is indifferent to the mysteries of science. Let us show briefly that the Christian is most reasonable when he believes in mysteries. "Both reason and philosophy" (says Bayle, an unprejudiced author), "show us by their clearest axioms that we could not act more rightly than by acquiescing without understanding in the mysteries which God has revealed to us."[37] "The more I try to contemplate the Infinite," says J. Rousseau, "the less I can conceive it (but that it exists is enough for me). The less I can conceive it, the more I adore it; I humble myself and I say: 'Being of beings, the highest use I can make of my reason is to abase myself before Thee';[38] it is the rapture of my mind and the joy of weakness to feel myself overwhelmed by Thy greatness."[39] "It is reason itself," says S. Thomas, "which makes us believe in God."[40] We believe in mysteries; do not think that there are no grounds for this faith. To believe without grounds is unworthy of a reasonable being; only it is not always necessary that the grounds of belief should rest on the sight and outward evidence of the thing. I believe in the exist-

[36] Even an atheist has said: "We know but imperfectly something of that immense chain of nature, and we little men, with our small eyes and brains, we talk boldly about God Himself." Voltaire. Quoted in the *Dict. of Involuntary Apologies.* Edit. Migne.

[37] *Works of Bayle,* Vol. III. Quoted in the complete edition of *Théologie,* Vol. IV., p. 218.

[38] Rousseau, quoted in same place.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] S. Thomas, *In lib. Boet. de Trinit.,* Bk. I., ques. 1, t. VIII., Art. 1.

ence of America, and I have never seen it, is my belief unreasonable? I believe, on the statement of medical men, in the wonderful discovery of the circulation of the blood; but I have never proved it myself. Life is full of things which we believe and yet have neither seen, nor examined, nor reasoned out. If the Christian is absurd in his belief in mysteries, then the whole world is absurd, because all men, even in the natural order make hourly acts of faith in truths which they do not understand. We Christians have even more solid grounds for our belief; for we have as guarantees for our faith, the word of God confirmed by the prophets, by miracles, by the establishment of Christianity, the permanence of the Church, the indestructible works of that Catholic Society which has been attacked through the centuries, without suffering injury to its Divine side; for proof and permanent witness we have that internal wisdom of Christianity, that mysterious correspondence with all the greatest thoughts and noblest feelings of man; a correspondence which God alone could calculate beforehand, "that inimitable harmony, which impresses us more deeply than miracles!" Says S. Thomas Aquinas[41] . . . "I should not insult an uneducated man if I said to him: the science of nature, mathematics and philosophy contain many mysteries which you will never be required to understand, but you may reasonably believe them on the word of learned men. Such a man would have sufficient good sense to answer: 'I know that these problems are above my intelligence, nor can I grasp their secrets, but I find no difficulty in believing what men whom I trust state to be true. . . . . '"

Religion is a cloudy pillar, at once both dark and light; we believe in the dark parts because of the light, and not in the light because of the darkness. There

[41] S. Thom. Aq., *In John.* "God has fortified the reasonableness of mysteries by analogies which serve both as vehicles and counter proofs." Mad Swetchine *Medit.*, p. 100.

are in the sun of religious proofs wondrous lights, which issue from the clouds, and irradiate every willing mind; these lights produce in us such strong conviction, that the existence of mystery does not seriously shake our faith. It is the shadow of the mountain which proves to us the existence of the sun; if there were no light, there would be no shadow. Unfortunately, there are minds which instead of turning to the light, take refuge in the shadow, and say with a sort of irony: See! we are right, where is the light? The light! it is all around us; look! and you will see how beautiful and radiant it is, projected from one pole to the other. Come out of your narrow shadow, there it is cold and dark indeed!

Advance a step further, one of those giant steps made on God's land. We can say: Reason could not have discovered the mysteries of Christianity, but once they are revealed, reason, enlightened by Divine light, studies them, scrutinises them, lights up the cloud which covers them, and daily makes it more transparent;[42] it is a sort of progressive initiation into heavenly glory.

Catholicism has produced great minds who have undertaken this grand work of throwing light into mysteries. With the wisdom and moderation of Christian genius, they have not hesitated to examine them; they have struck the divine rock, and sparks have burst forth. It was of these saintly bold men that S. Bernard spoke, when he said that certain souls are as it were exalted by the hand of God, Who so casts them into the glory and light of His Secrets, that that which would have been on their part only a tentative boldness, becomes their glory, love and security. "This glory will not oppress me," he continues, "although I submerge myself in it with all my strength, but I shall

[42] S. Basil, *Hom. 8,* par. 6, *in Hexaem.,* says, "God has given us beforehand in nature a thousand reasons for believing in the marvellous." *See also his note*—Edit. *Select Library of Nicene and post Nicene Fathers,* Vol. VIII., S. Basil.

rather flow into it, and be transformed by it."[43] Before concluding, let us prostrate ourselves before God, and if ever we have used rash words about the mysteries of religion, let us say to the Lord with the Prophet: Lord, pardon me, for "I have uttered that which I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not."[44] This is the humble confession of every soul which knows its weakness and the mistakes of presumptuous pride! Let us say with as much reason as love: My God, I believe Thy word, even when my mind is compelled to humble itself: for humiliation before Thee is a glory and an honour, and the light which comes to us from it is of more value for the mind and the heart than all the pretensions of earthly wisdom.

[43] S. Bernard, *Song of Songs,* Serm. 62, Par. 5.
[44] Job. xlii. 3.

THE EUCHARIST.

LECTURE I.

TRUTH OF THE SACRAMENT. THE REAL PRESENCE.

"Take, eat. This is My Body. Drink ye. This is My Blood."—*S. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27.*

"THERE is nothing," said S. Bernard, "which rejoices me more, yet no subject which inspires me with greater fear, than to speak of the Blessed Virgin Mary."[1] He rejoiced, because children always love to speak of their mothers, but he also feared, because no mortal language can satisfy us wherewith to express her praises.

The same thought comes naturally to God's minister, when he would consider the greatest of the mysteries of Redemption,[2] the most ineffable and astonishing marvel of the power and love of God. There is, moreover, this difference, that here the reasons for desire and fear are still more numerous and real, whether on account of the dignity of the Blessed Sacrament, which does not admit of comparison with even the greatest of creatures, or by reason of the greater feebleness of him who is attempting to speak a Divine language.

To speak of the Eucharist is the natural wish and need of every priest who has known our Lord intimately, whose lips are moistened morning by morning with His Divine Blood, whose breast breathes one atmosphere with our Lord Jesus Christ, and whose heart should guard jealously Divine love like a fire which must never be extinguished. When we love deeply, the name of the loved one is never forgotten in the depths of the soul, and our lips even murmur it.

[1] *Works of S. Bernard,* Vol. III., 4th Sermon for the Assumption of B.V.M., Sec. 5. (French Edit.)

[2] "The Eucharist," says S. Thomas, "is the perfection and consummation of the other Sacraments." *Sum. Theo.* 3rd Part. Ques. 75, Art. 1, page 264.

Now the Eucharist is the love of God in its sweetest and most complete form; it is love with all its excesses and sublime follies, and according as it penetrates the heart of the priest it must, so to speak, transubstantiate it, and communicate to it a need of loving more, a need of singing the praise of its love, a heavenward movement, a continual progress, which beginning here below, never stops till it ends in eternal happiness. But may we sing in our earthly exile of mysteries which the angels themselves scarcely understand? God, in the Eucharist, dwells in inaccessible light, and when we desire to approach the holy mountain, we fear to hear a voice proceeding out of the whirlwind, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins and answer Me."[3] Yet the children of Israel were permitted to sing of hope on the banks of the river of Babylon: they were allowed to ask Moses about the manna in the desert, and Moses could answer them. "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."[4] We are not then forbidden, under the law of grace, to consider the manna which God allows to fall in this life's desert, and to ask with a loving curiosity: "What is this? This marvel of God's love."[5] And even if we obtain no other answer than that of Moses, it will at least be to us a consolation. Love will be half satisfied, and our glance at heavenly mysteries will not have gone beyond the bounds of religious reverence.

We will divide our subject as follows:—1. The Truth of this Eucharistic dogma; 2. That this mystery is neither impossible, nor contrary to reason; 3. The Eucharist is a food; 4. It is a drink; 5. It is the masterpiece of Divine Love.

"If anyone," says the Council of Trent, "denies that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are truly, really and substantially

[3] Job xxxviii. 2, 3.
[4] Exodus xvi. 15.
[5] *Ibid.* (margin).

contained, together with His Soul and His Divinity; if anyone maintains that in this Sacrament, the Saviour is found only as in a sign, under a figure, or by marvellous effects, let him be anathema."[6]

The Catholic belief is also perfectly expressed in the following formula,[7] which was recited in a council of the eleventh century, by the first Sectarian who had denied the dogma of the Real Presence. "I believe from my heart, and confirm with my lips, that by virtue of the words of Consecration, the bread and wine placed upon the altar are substantially changed into the true and living Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. I believe that after the Consecration, It is the true Body of Christ born of the Virgin, which was offered on the Cross for the salvation of the world, and which is seated on the Right Hand of the Father, that It is the true Blood of Christ that issued from His Side, and that all these mysteries are not only signs but that they exist in their true nature and substance."

During the advent of 1861 and 1862 I explained, in so far as my ability allowed me, the great mystery of the Incarnation. I made my profession of faith and that of the Church as to Christ—His Divinity and His supernatural mission. In the five following lectures I shall speak of the Eucharist. I shall be in one sense not changing my subject, for the Holy Eucharist is only the Incarnation still continued in our midst, the extension of the same mystery.

I.

Holy Scripture, the Councils and Christian tradition, all unite to establish the truth of the Eucharistic dogma. These are the three great sources of Divine truths, especially those that reason cannot approach directly. It is clear that we could not immediately prove the Eucharist to one who did not acknowledge

[6] Session XIII.

[7] Quoted by Billuart (tr. XVII., p. 90). *On the Eucharist.* It is the formula recited by Beranger.

the Christian revelation, just as it would be impossible for a professor of mathematics to demonstrate the four last books of geometry to one who was ignorant of the four first. There are in human science as well as in Divine, truths which presuppose others anterior to them, and truth has its progressive paths, like roads which lead from one town to the other. If, then, we were to meet with a man who did not yet believe in the Gospels, and in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, we should begin by establishing firmly these two truths; and then, Gospel in hand, we could try to make him understand the Divine Saviour's thought in the Holy Eucharist.

1. First of all we find our Lord, constrained by the desire of His Heart, announcing beforehand the miracle of love which He intends to work. "The Bread that I will give," He says, "Is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews, therefore, strove amongst themselves saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. . . . For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him... This is that Bread which came down from Heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever." Jesus spake these things in the synagogue of Capernaum. "Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can hear it?' When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you? what, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. . . . . From that time, many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him."[8]

[8] S. John vi. 51—66.

Let us examine these first words, though they already seem plain enough. It is evident that Jesus is promising with all the solemnity of His all-powerful Love the institution of the Divine Eucharist. I know that many people, while admitting the truth of the Gospel explained in their own way, do not believe in the Real Presence; they try to torture the meaning of the words, and will only allow that there is a spiritual Communion by faith. We Catholics certainly admit the spiritual communion of the soul with God, as I shall explain farther on. We believe there is a meeting of the soul with God in the inmost recesses of the heart; but we also recognise the reality of Sacramental Communion; because man, being composed of body and soul, needs to be brought to the spiritual through the corporal; and for us this Sacramental Communion is only a means by which we are led to a true adoration in spirit and in truth, and to participation in the Divine Life. But the important point to make clear *now* is, that it is impossible, without destroying our confidence in the truth of the Gospel, to admit that the Eucharist is only a sign or symbol. Such an attempt cannot be maintained in face of the clear statement in these words. "The Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."[9] We may even say that in order to remove the shadow of a pretext for doubt, Christ permitted unbelievers to exist then among His hearers, and that they made to Himself the same objection which would be repeated all down the centuries. He has allowed these doubts, this want of faith, in order to let His thought stand out in fuller relief, and His doctrine to be more firmly established. The Jews, scandalised by the words of Jesus Christ, exclaimed: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"[10] If the words of the Saviour had only an allegorical sense, this was the opportunity to explain Himself clearly; it was even, if I may be allowed to say so, a question of loyalty to truth on the part of the

[9] S. John vi. 51. [10] S. John vi. 52.

Divine Master. It was the time to say: "You mistake the meaning of My words; I do not think of giving you My Flesh to eat, I am only using a figure of speech, which simply means, 'you will think of Me.'"

Yes, if the Real Presence in the Eucharist is not a truth, Jesus Christ was bound to explain His meaning; His honour and His loyalty were involved, nay, even His reverence for the Divinity; for by not explaining Himself clearly, He would have allowed a vast system of idolatry to be established among the thousand millions of Catholics, who have filled and will fill the whole universe. But notice carefully, not only does our Lord, in replying to the Jews' objection, not indicate any parabolic sense in His Words, but He as it were drives in their meaning, by insisting forcibly on the truth of His statement, and assuming the tone of a solemn oath. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise Him up at the Last Day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, even so he that eateth Me, shall live by Me."[11] After words so definite, so precise, so astonishingly clear, say, if you dare to do so, and your mind is completely rationalistic, that the Saviour deceived Himself and has deceived mankind, you will then be consistent in your system of Christian negation; but if you are Christians, believing the Gospel, without at the same time believing in the truth of the Eucharist, then you are to me incomprehensible, and you remain to me the most astonishing proof of the power the sectarian spirit possesses to make men blind.

It is true that the Saviour adds: "It is the spirit

[11] S. John vi. 53—57.

that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."[12] But notice the occasion: the people of Capernaum had murmured at this first saying of Jesus Christ, because they were convinced that the Saviour meant His Flesh would be eaten under a natural and visible form, as ordinary food is eaten. It was to forearm them against this error,[13] without injuring the truth of His announcement, that Christ adds, "It is the spirit," etc., as we say daily, *words* are nothing, it is the *thought* that matters, and nevertheless the word is the vehicle of the thought: just as we say, sound is no part of prayer, it is the heart which gives life to the words; and yet vocal prayer has its importance. But to draw the conclusion that the words of Jesus Christ are entirely metaphorical, is to take a line which logically leads to denying the whole doctrine of the Incarnation; to saying that Christ's Body was not a true Body, and that it is His spirit alone which gives life. Listen to S. Augustine. "The flesh profiteth nothing," says this great Doctor, "but only in the sense that the people of Capernaum meant, that is to say, flesh such as is sold for food; but these words cannot be applied to the flesh quickened by the spirit."[14] The Saviour said, "The flesh profiteth nothing," as S. Paul said: "Knowledge puffeth up." Are we to hate knowledge? God forbid! What knowledge is it then that puffeth up? Knowledge without love; add love to knowledge, and the latter will be most useful. In the same way for these words: "The flesh alone profiteth nothing," let spirit be joined to flesh, and the latter will profit indeed; for "if the flesh profiteth nothing, the Word would not have become Incarnate."

[12] S. John vi. 63.

[13] S. Chrys., *on S. John, Hom. XLVII.*, No. 2, v. 63, p. 408. Oxford Edit.

[14] S. Aug.: *On S. John's Gos.* Tract XXVII., No. 5. Oxford Edit.

"Nam si caro nihil prodesset, Verbum caro non fieret."[15] [16]

Let us rapidly trace out the teaching of theology on the manner in which the Flesh of Jesus Christ is present in the Holy Eucharist.

The Flesh of Jesus Christ is in a sacramental and almost spiritual state, say the holy Doctors, it is really there, but after the manner of a substance;[17] from which it follows that we do not eat the Flesh of Christ, that we do not press It with our teeth, nor digest It like ordinary food. We eat It sacramentally and invisibly, says one most celebrated Commentator on the Bible, we eat It hidden under the species of bread and wine.[18] "The Lord," says S. Thomas, "promised to give Himself as spiritual nourishment, not that the true Flesh of Christ is not in the Sacrament but because we eat it in a certain divine and spiritual manner." "Quia quodam spirituali et divino modo manducatur."[19]

Our Lord, then, only rebukes the sensual thought of carnal eating, and it is in this sense that many Commentators explain the words—"Caro non prodest quidquam."[20] What Jesus Christ reproves, is the interpretation of the people of Capernaum, but in this explanation of Eucharistic truth given by the Christ Himself, there is not a single word which can reasonably authorise the denial of the Sacrament. The only true and possible conclusion is this: Christ does not give Himself to us in the Eucharist as ordinary nourishment, His words have a higher meaning, they indicate to us a real mode of presence, but Sacramental, hidden, invisible, divine and almost spiritual, I am

[15] See also S. Chrysos. and S. Aug., quoted by S. Thom. Aq., *Catena aurea.* John vi. 63. Ox. Edit. p. 249.

[16] and [17] *Note.* For the use and meaning of this word see Translator's Preface.

[18] Cornelius à Lapide, *on S. John vi. 64.*

[19] S. Thom. Aq., *on S. John vi.,* lec. viii.

[20] Cornelius à Lapide: *in 1 Ep. to Cor. xi. 24,* p. 302.

purposely using expressions employed by the Fathers and the Doctors of the Church.[21]

2. We have seen clearly that the Saviour bound Himself by a solemn promise to give us His true Flesh for food, and, His true Blood, for drink. But, with God, promises always become actions, and we see Christ realising by a solemn act of love what He had announced to His disciples as the thought of a Heart full of tenderness. At the Last Supper, " Jesus," says the Evangelist, " took bread, and blessed It and brake It, and gave It to His disciples saying, ' Take, eat, This is My Body which is given for you.' Afterwards He took the Cup, and gave thanks saying, ' Drink ye all of It, for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.' "

These words have only one possible meaning for Catholics, as indeed for everyone who reads the Gospel without prejudice or partisanship. The context, the force of the expressions, the clearness of each word, allow no thought of metaphor or parable, otherwise there would be no possible means on earth of understanding one another, and to the clearest and most positive assertions, we could always bring forward the possibility of a figurative meaning, or an unreality. When we offer a person food, saying, " Take, eat, this is excellent food," we should be very much astonished if anyone so interpreted our meaning, as to claim that we simply meant: " Take this and eat it, this is the shadow, the picture, the metaphor of something good." And yet men maintain, that when we hear words than which none can be clearer; when we hear Christ say, " Take, eat, this is My Body . . . My Blood; the very Body given for you—the very Blood shed for you," that we must believe it to be a figure, a sign or whatever we please except the reality. No, we reply with Luther's disciple, the celebrated Melanchthon, " These

[21] S. Aug., *On Psalm 98, No. 9*, p. 454. Ox. Edit.

words flash upon us like lightning, but the terrified mind can find no objection to them."[22]

Some may say with our adversaries, that Christ could not do this miracle, that it is an unreasonable absurdity; I hope to show you in the next address, that this objection has no logical value, and that a sane philosophy can authorise other conclusions. But if you believe in Christ, and in His Divinity, how do you explain other of His miracles beyond our reason? If you say that Christ *could* not do this miracle, then you deny His Power and His Divinity, but if His Power has not failed, I conclude emphatically the reality of the marvel; for it is impossible to deny the will of Christ expressed in such formal, clear and positive terms. In fact, can you tell me how it would be possible to formulate words *more* clear or *more* decisive than these, "Take, eat, this is My Body, drink ye all this . . this is My Blood," to express the dogma of the Holy Eucharist as held by the whole Catholic Church?

3. I remember that in 1840, I was crossing the Lake of Zurich shortly after the banishment of Strauss. This man, so sadly celebrated for his *Life of Jesus,* denied the Divinity of Christ, and saw fables throughout the Gospels. He had been appointed a Professor in the University of Zurich, but the population, who still believe in the Divinity of Christ, had turned against him, and the Professor was obliged to leave the town. On the same steamboat there was a young student, who attacked the works of Strauss vigorously, and justified his banishment. We entered into conversation, and I answered him quite simply. "You will understand, Sir, that I am very far from admitting Strauss' opinions, but I do not quite understand why you have driven him away; for according to your principles, each believer is inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore has a right to his own private inter-

[22] Melanchthon, *On the True Body and Blood of God.* Quoted by Corn. à Lap., *on 1st Ep. Cor.,* Ch. XI., v. 24.

pretation of the Scriptures. Why have you in this matter the monopoly of the Holy Spirit, while the poor Doctor is entirely disinherited? Who gives you this assurance? You have claimed for three centuries, that the words, 'This is My Body,' were a parable, not a reality, and you have gravely asserted that your interpretation was inspired by the Holy Spirit:—Here is Strauss asserting that the Spirit of Truth has made a similar revelation to him, that such words as 'The Word was made Flesh'—'My Father and I are one'—'I am the Son of God,' and others like them, are only figurative, not a true assertion, a myth or anything you like: they mean simply that Christ is a great man. This, Sir, is Strauss' reasoning, and according to your principles, very conclusive." "But," said he, "those who do not admit the Divinity of Christ are not Christians." "You state this," I said, "and Strauss states the contrary, who is to judge between you? I will even add that he is more consistent with your principles, than you are; for he uses his right to interpret the Bible as he will, and he applies to the Incarnation the same system of interpretation that you have applied to the Eucharist; you see a myth in the Eucharist, and he in his turn sees a myth in the Incarnation!"

4. We see then where the denial of the Eucharistic Mystery would lead us. If Jesus Christ is not really and substantially present in the Sacrament of His Love, then by pronouncing words as clear and positive as these, "This is My Body, This is My Blood," He has allowed a vast system of idolatry to be introduced, since it is a fact that on account of His words in the Gospel, millions of Christians for eighteen centuries have adored Christ under the Sacramental species. Even if the Saviour's words had been slightly ambiguous, which we are far from admitting, a clear and definite explanation would have been necessary, to remove all pretext of misunderstanding. Not only has Christ *not* given this explanation, but He has continued to use in many places the same definite expres-

sions; and both through His Apostles and through the greatest minds of the primitive Church, He has authorised the same plainness of speech, and the same traditional belief. Thus Jesus Christ would be the direct cause of this immense idolatry, and what is more, as God, He would have foreseen it, and yet not have prevented it. We recoil before such blasphemy! "No," said Erasmus, with his usual good sense, "no one could ever persuade me that Jesus Christ, Who is Truth and Love, would have allowed for so long in His beloved Church, such an abominable error as the adoration of a mere fragment of flour."[23]

5. But objection is raised that often in Holy Scripture, and especially in the Gospels, the verb TO BE is employed in a figurative sense. Thus our Saviour said, 'I am the Vine, and My Father the husbandman." He said, "The seed is the Word of God." Is it not in the same figurative sense that He says, "This is My Body"? If the objection is a just one, what follows? In ordinary speech there are a thousand instances in which the verb TO BE is employed in a metaphorical sense; nothing is more familiar than such phrases as, this hero is a lion, that man is a lamb, the army was a wall of brass. Therefore am I never to believe that the verb TO BE means something real? and when it is said, "What you see is a man," I am to understand that it is simply the picture of a man, but not really one. When told this is a house, it will mean to us that it is the sign or shadow of a house. On such a system, we should clearly fall into a realm of imagination, there would no longer be truth or reality here below, nothing but a reign of myth and metaphor, and language would be a sort of perpetual fantasia. Let us speak seriously, and own that when the verb TO BE is employed in the sense of a metaphor, the connection and consequences of the phrase, the circumstances of time, place and persons under which it is

[23] Erasmus, *Epis. to Ludov Berum.* Quoted by Corn. à Lap., *on 1 Ep. to Cor. xi. 24,* p. 303.

used illuminate and determine very clearly and positively the sense of the words, and assign to them a figurative value. But in the case in point, not only are there none of these circumstances, nor any explanation which precedes or follows, but there are in the words of Jesus Christ, such an assumption of positive teaching and accumulation of plain statements, that one cannot understand how it would be possible to make them clearer. "I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven. . . The Bread that I will give is My Flesh which I will give for the life of the world. My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him."[24] "Take, eat, This is My Body which is given for you." "Drink ye all of it, for this is My Blood which is shed for you."[25]

6. We will finally quote an unprejudiced interpreter of the Gospel text, namely, Luther, with all the German Monk's crudity of expression. "I wish," says he, "that there was someone clever enough to persuade me that there is nothing in the Eucharist but bread and wine; such an one would do me a great service. I have worked at this question in the sweat of my brow, but I confess that I am powerless, I see no way of evading the fact, the text of the Gospel is too clear."[26] Elsewhere Luther exclaims: "I beg my adversaries not to ask me to explain the Gospel text—'This is My Body'; they can consult on this point children of seven years old, who learn to spell at school. Let them bring their Bibles, and show me where the words can be found. 'This is the SIGN of My Body.'" "Some," he says again, "torment the pronoun THIS. Others quarrel with the verb IS, and a third torment the word BODY. Others

[24] S. John vi.

[25] S. Matt. xxvi. 26; S. Luke xxii. 19, 20.

[26] Luther, *Epistle ad Argent,* quoted by Billuart, *on Eucharist,* diss. 1, art. 3.

finally execute the whole text."[27] What would Luther have said, and what a vigorous blow his pen would have wielded against the German sectarians, if he had known the numerous subsequent tortures which the Gospel text had suffered for three centuries, in the anatomical cabinets of German criticism? Cardinal Bellarmine[28] counted in his day already two hundred different shades of interpretation: he thought it well to reduce them to ten principal and contradictory ones; that is fairly reasonable for four words which are very clear in themselves; and is a fresh proof that nothing is more changeable than human interpretation, when once it has turned its back on the Divine shore of truth!

7. S. Paul has also spoken of the Eucharistic Mystery, and he is not less explicit than the Evangelists. "I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you," he says, "that the Lord Jesus, the same night that He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks He brake it, and said—Take, eat, this is My Body which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My Blood, do this as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.[29] Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. . . . For whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup unworthily, . . eateth and drinketh judgment (marg.) to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body."[30]

Consider seriously if the Eucharist were nothing but

[27] Luther, *In Apol. de Coen Domini.* Quoted by Billuart. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

[28] Bellarmine, *De Eucharist,* Vol. I., Ch. VIII., p. 195. Edit de Venise.

[29] 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

[30] 1 Cor. xi. 27—29.

a SIGN, and not a reality, how could the Apostle say—"Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord . . . . . eateth and drinketh judgment to himself"? These words have no meaning unless the Eucharist is a living reality; then only could there be sacrilegious profanation; then only could there be an outrage so real and personal, that the Sacred Host would Itself become condemnation. For if the Holy Host were only a sign or type of Jesus Christ, as were formerly the manna and the Paschal lamb, the result would be that we could say also with S. Paul, that those who ate the manna and the Paschal lamb in a state of mortal sin, were guilty of profaning the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. No one would dare to admit such a consequence. We must reject the principle on which it is made, and say that the words of S. Paul are only reasonable according to the belief of the Catholic Church, which necessarily implies the real Presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

8. After Holy Scripture, the most venerated authority in the Church is that of General Councils, that is to say, a general gathering of Bishops, presided over by the Sovereign Pontiff or his delegates, and in which the faith was formulated, and transcribed in the ecclesiastical archives to remain as a witness of the beliefs of different ages. Many of our adversaries admit the value and the authority of the four first General Councils. But here is what we read in the first Council of Nicæa—"We ought not to refer to our senses when we see the bread and wine, but lifting up our hearts by faith, we should understand that the Lamb of God is present on that Table, He Himself Who has taken away the sins of the world, and Who now is immolated by the priest in an unbloody manner. We ought, in receiving His Body and Blood, to believe that therein is the pledge of our resurrection."[31] At

[31] 1st Council of Nicæa. Quoted by Bellarmine, *On Holy Eucharist,* Bk. II., Ch. IV., p. 235.

the Council of Ephesus, the third General Council, a letter of S. Cyril to Nestorius was approved in which was the following passage. " We celebrate an unbloody sacrifice, and we become participants of His Sacred Flesh and of His Precious Blood. For we do not receive it as ordinary flesh, far be from us such a thought! We do not receive it as the flesh of a holy man, of a man united to the Word by the ties of his merit, but as the true, life-giving Flesh of the Word."[32]

Another General Council in the eighth century declares that neither the Lord nor His Apostles, nor the Fathers have called the Eucharist the IMAGE of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, but the Body and Blood itself. " Nowhere did Christ say take and eat the image or sign of My Body . . . neither did the Lord nor the Apostles, nor the Fathers, say the image of a sacrifice is offered, but His Body and His Blood." " Nusquam Christus dixit, acceptite et comedite imaginem corporis mei. . . Nusquam Dominus vel Apostoli aut Patres imaginem dixerunt sacrificium incruentum quod per sacerdotem offertur, sed ipsum corpus et ipsum sanguinem."[33]

9. After Councils, the Church rests her faith on the witness of her Doctors; the latter are like beacon fires lighted on different heights along the ages, to show the bright and traditional road of Christian truth. Many controversialists have collected together on this matter numerous and most conclusive passages. We will confine ourselves to two or three passages which belong specially to the five first centuries.

S. Ignatius, successor to S. Peter at Antioch, says in speaking of certain heretics of his day: " They abstain from the Eucharist, because they will not recognise that it is the Flesh of Jesus Christ our Saviour, the same Flesh which has suffered for our sins and which

[32] S. Cyril of Alex.: *Epist. 17,* t. X., p. 114. Edit. Migne.

[33] Second Council of Nicæa. Labbe, Bk. VII.

the Father hath raised again in His Mercy."[34] Then the holy martyr adds, "Those who will not admit this benefit from God, find death in their disputations."[35]

S. Justin, who lived at the beginning of the second century, relates what passed in the assemblies of the Christians, and after having said that the deacons distributed the bread and wine, he adds: "We call this food the Eucharist. We do not partake of it as of a common food and drink, for inasmuch as the Saviour has taken flesh and blood for our salvation, we believe also that this nourishment over which the prayers of Christ have been pronounced, has become the Flesh and the Blood of the Incarnate Word."[36]

"Our flesh," says Tertullian, "is nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ, in order that the soul should feed upon the Divinity. Caro corpore et sanguine Christi vescitur, ut et anima de Deo saginetur."[37]

"Before the Consecration," says S. Ambrose, "it is bread, after the Consecration It is the Flesh of Christ. Before the words it is wine, after the words have been pronounced It is the Blood of the Saviour, the same Blood which has redeemed the people. . . The Word has created all things, He spake and all was made, He commanded and everything came out of nothingness. What a power there is in the word of the Lord Jesus, when it is a question of creating! By the same reasoning this Almightiness can be exercised in the change of substance."[38]

Let us listen to S. Cyril of Alexandria. "Christ has said—'He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.' Notice," con-

[34] S. Ignatius, *Epist. to Smyrneans,* VI. and VII. p. 108. Edit. of the Red. Temple Chevalier.

[35] *Ibid.,* VII., p. 108.

[36] S. Justin, *On the Sacraments, 1st Apology,* No. 66, p. 51. Ox. Edit.

[37] Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Body,* Ch. VIII., p. 230. Edin. Edit.

[38] S. Ambrose, *On the Mysteries,* Ch. IX., Select Library of the Fathers.

tinues the holy Doctor, "that Jesus Christ has not promised to dwell in us only by a relation of affection, but by a participation of nature. If you take a piece of wax, and join it to another piece, and then expose both to the fire, they will mingle by liquefaction, and the result will be one body. In the same way, he who receives the Flesh of our Saviour, and who drinks His precious Blood, becomes, as Jesus Christ assures us, one body with Him, he is mingled with Him by this participation in such a way that he is in the Christ, and the Christ in him."[39] "God quickens us," he says elsewhere, "not by the participation of His Spirit only, but by giving us to eat the same flesh with which He clothed Himself for us."[40]

Let us conclude with S. Chrysostom. He equals in enlightened energy, if he does not surpass, all the preceding testimony. "We are one body with Christ, says the Apostle, we are of His Flesh and of His Bones. In order that these words may be a reality, and not only an act of faith and of love, we ought to unite ourselves with the Flesh of Christ, that Flesh which He has given us for nourishment, in order to show us the greatness of His love. For Christ willed thus to unite Himself to us, He willed to make of us one body, a body united to the Head. Such is the nature of love. Job has a glimpse of this when he says that his servants love him so much, that they wish to eat of his flesh. This is what Christ has done to unite us to Him more fully, and to prove to us a greater love than Job's, He allows Himself to be touched, to be eaten, He enters into us to operate in us the most intimate of unions. He says to us: 'Parents often allow their children to be nourished by strangers, but I nourish My children with My own Flesh, I give Myself up as nourishment. I desire to ennoble you all. I willed to become your Brother in becoming Incarnate, and now I give up to

[39] S. Cyril of Alexandria. *In S. John*, Bk. X., Ch. XV., v. 1. Edit Migne.
[40] *Ibid., De Incarnation*, t. VIII., p. 1242.

you this same Flesh and this same Blood, which have made Me of your family.' "[41] Elsewhere S. Chrysostom put these words into the mouth of Jesus Christ. "I left for you the glory of My Father, I gave Myself up to all kinds of sufferings, I pursued you with My love, I have united Myself to you, I have said to you, Eat Me, drink Me. It was not enough for you that I ascended into Heaven, bearing the first-fruits of your nature. That was not enough for your desires! I descended again to earth, and not only do I unite Myself to you, but I dissolve Myself in you, I become your nourishment, I become little, in order that the union and the mingling may be complete. In ordinary unions, each being remains within its own limits, but as for Me, I will to penetrate you intimately; I will have no intermediary, I will that two should become ONE."[42]

10. In translating these passages, it has been impossible to give the whole force of thought, as it exists in the original. The Greek language has a depth, a delicacy and power of expression, to which modern language seems unable to attain. In particular, S. Chrysostom has in the original text a luminous and penetrating force, of which it is only possible to produce a faint reflection: nevertheless, what life, what heavenly light, what splendour of truth exists even in a tarnished translation! It is impossible to speak more clearly, more precisely than these writers, and the Church, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, could not formulate her belief with greater or more holy energy. We must believe in the Eucharist, or renounce Christianity, we must believe in the Eucharist, or become rationalistic, for when once you admit the truth of the Gospels and of Revelation, you must believe the evidence of the text. As soon as you admit the divine mission of Jesus Christ, you must also admit

[41] S. Chrysostom, *On S. John. Homily XLVI. on Ch. VI., v. 52*, p. 399. Oxford Edit.
[42] *Ibid., On Epist. 1 to Tim. Hom. XV.*, last pages.

that He did not intend to deceive generations of men by language which says one thing, and means another: you must admit that for twenty centuries, the greatest Saints, the greatest Doctors, have not reasoned wrongly on such a fundamental matter, and have not adopted monstrous beliefs; for in short, either the Eucharist is a truth, or truly the most monstrous of idolatries. Are you to claim that the Apostles, and men like Ignatius of Antioch, Augustine, Gregory, Chrysostom, Thomas of Aquinas, Bossuet, Fénélon, have been thus grossly deceived in the meaning of the Gospels; that after so many centuries of idolatry, the true meaning of Christ's words has been revealed to men, who have come to contradict all former traditions! I can only say that if they are right we must renounce Christianity and conclude that it is a gigantic trickery, which has duped humanity for centuries. Therefore there is no middle way between belief in the Eucharist,—or—the destruction of Christianity. Either the Eucharist, or pure rationalism. . . .

Yes, belief in the Eucharist is a fact which dominates all Christianity; it is its strength and its life; it is the support of the Church, the spring of her joy, and the source of her spiritual health. In whatever direction we gaze along the vast horizon of ages preceding the sixteenth century, we see the same harmony of belief in the Christian Church, on this subject, everywhere the same echo, the same hymn of faith and love. The Eastern Church has all the freshness and poetry natural to its language, when she speaks to us of this mystery, and the Western Church replies, in the grave and solemn voice of an Augustine or a Jerome. In order to destroy the dogma of the Eucharist, it would be necessary to tear up the Gospels, to silence the voice of centuries, and to condemn the Christian soul to agnosticism. It is true human pride has claimed to be heard from time to time, and has protested against what it calls impossibilities. But if, in order to believe a truth, it were necessary to await the assent of all

human tastes, humanity would never have believed anything, not even the most evident things; for everything has been denied, everything has been doubted, both the foundations of society, the distinctions between good and evil, and the existence of bodies; the objections raised by sophists against these and many ordinary truths are as specious and subtle as the difficulties imagined against the Eucharist. Why then should we be astonished that the sectarian mind should deny the evident clearness of the words of Jesus Christ, of the Apostles, and of all the Doctors who have carried on the chain of traditional teaching? To borrow Luther's thought, passion which interprets "is an executioner," and the text submitted to the torture is the sufferer who is torn to pieces. Leibnitz, although a Protestant, saw plainly that it was impossible to deny history as to belief in the Eucharistic dogma, and he was not afraid to say that "this dogma had always been admitted by Christian antiquity, and that, with the exception of the Reformers, the unanimity of the Churches on this point was so great, and so firmly established, that one must either avow the truth of the matter, or pronounce that this kind of truth can never be proved."[43]

The difficulties raised against the mystery of the Eucharist, and the denials following in consequence, have logically caused like difficulties and denials to be brought against the mystery of the Incarnation; for it is not more difficult to understand the Eucharist than the Incarnation;[44] the first of these mysteries, on the contrary, follows the other in the natural course of things. So it has followed that the denials of "Reformers" with reference to this doctrine have been a bridge allowing souls to pass over to pure unitarianism and rationalism.

Finally, these objections have been seen and under-

[43] Leibnitz, *Système Théologique*, pp. 94—97.
[44] Tertullian, *On the Flesh of God*, Ch. IV., p. 172. Edin. Edit.

stood by the greatest men of Christendom, nevertheless, their faith has remained unshaken, simple as that of a child, and strong as that of genius. Let us not pretend to more intellect than our fathers, but let us believe as they did.

II.

As Catholics, we believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but that does not prevent our believing many other truths contained in Holy Scripture and tradition, which are supplementary to the Eucharistic dogma.

1. Thus we believe that besides the Blessed Sacrament, there is a continual communion of the soul with God; we believe that the Body of Christ, and the Blood of Christ are also in every divine word, every act of faith; that whoever acts righteously, and holds steadfastly to truth, is united to Christ, because Christ is wisdom, goodness and truth. We believe that every good desire, every holy aspiration is a feeding on Christ; we even believe with S. Augustine that every intellectual act is in a sense a feeding on truth. We see from this point of view how the horizons of communion with God are enlarged.

But all these great thoughts do not in any way prevent us from recognising the Sacramental Presence in the Eucharist, and the obligation it imposes upon Christians, just as belief in the real Humanity of the Saviour does not hinder us from believing in the immaterial beauty, the omnipotence, the eternity and the purifying virtue of the Word. In the Eucharist, as in the Incarnation, the Flesh of Christ is only a vehicle to bring us to the Spirit. "Caro non prodest quidquam, spiritus est qui vivificat." Listen to the language of the holy Doctors, who make these truths clear.

"There is a perfect manna," says S. Ambrose, "it is the Bread born of the Virgin and of which the Gospel speaks, but there is also a spiritual manna, it

is a rain of invisible wisdom, that waters righteous souls, and which gives savour to our spiritual palate. He who understands this infusion of Divine Wisdom lives ever in joy, he asks no other nourishment. This food preserves the soul of the wise man, it enlightens it, it fills it with sweetness and glorious light, it is as divine honey composed of the perfume of virtues, and the words of wisdom."[45]

"We drink the Blood of Christ," says Origen, "not only under the Sacramental form, but whenever we receive His Word full of life. The Blood of Christ is the Word which nourishes the soul, and rejoices the heart."[46]

"We eat the Flesh of Christ," says S. Jerome, "and we drink His Blood, not only under the Sacramental form, but in the reading of the Scriptures; for the Word of God is truly meat and drink."[47]

"The bread and wine can also be taken in a spiritual sense," says S. Augustine; "the bread and wine are justice and truth, and Christ is the Truth. When you read the word of God, when you hear it, when you meditate upon it, you eat the bread. The Eucharist is daily bread, but the word which I distribute to you is also daily bread: that which you have read, that which you sing is also your daily bread."[48]

"We eat the Flesh of Christ," says S. Basil, "and we drink His Blood, having become by the mystery of the Incarnation, sharers in the Word and in Wisdom. For Christ calls all that concerns His life in the flesh, His Flesh and Blood, and also His doctrine which nourishes the soul, and which includes practical, natural and theological teaching."[49]

[45] S. Ambrose, *Epist. 64, No. 1, 2.*
[46] Origen, *In Num. Hom. 16, No. 8.*
[47] S. Jerome, *in Ecclesiasten,* etc., Vol. III., p. 1039. Edit. Migne.
[48] S. Augustine, *On Ps. 104.* Sermon III., par. 14. *Ibid., Ps. xxxvii.* Serm. III., p. 5.
[49] S. Basil, *Epist. 8, Sec. 4.* The whole passage (No. 4) should be read to understand S. Basil's words fully.

"There are two ways of understanding the Eucharist," says Origen, "there is the ordinary meaning of the Sacrament, but there is the deeper meaning of the truth which is the food of the soul."[50] "He who believes in God, feeds on God," says Pope Innocent III. "He is incorporated into Christ by faith. Qui credit in Deum, comedit ipsum."[51] "The faithful receive Christ in the Sacrament," says S. Anselm, "but they also receive Him in a special manner when they do good, and act like Christ."[52] "We receive the Flesh of Christ in the Eucharist," says the Blessed Lanfranc, "but in another sense we eat Christ Wholly, when we desire eternal life, which is nothing less than Christ, when we meditate on His law, when we love our brethren, when we think of Christ suffering: both kinds of eating are helpful and necessary."[53] "It is to eat Christ spiritually," says S. Thomas, "when we believe in Him and love Him, even when we do not think of the Sacrament."[54]

And further, according to the beautiful and luminous teaching of S. Augustine, every intellectual act is as it were a feeding on God in the natural order. "The Word of God," says this great Doctor, "is the bread of the soul, panis animae quid, nisi Verbum Dei? It is the Word of God Who continually nourishes every reasonable soul, and is its permanent nourishment. By Him the heavenly intelligences are nourished, by Him they have life, wisdom, happiness." And elsewhere, "Truth is our beverage."[55]

"O Saviour, Thou art with us, not only on this altar, whither Thou callest all Thy children to eat the Bread come down from heaven, but Thou art also within us. On this invisible altar in this Church, and

[50] Origen, *In John*, Vol. IV., p. 810. Edit. Migne.
[51] Innocent III., *De Sac. alt. myst.*, Bk. IV., Ch. XIV.
[52] S. Anselm, *Epist. 107*. Migne edition.
[53] Lanfranc, *De corpore et sang*, Ch. XV.
[54] S. Thom. Aq., 4 sent. dist. 9. Qu. 1, art. 2.
[55] S. Augustine *in Ps. 101*, Serm. I., par. 5.

in the sanctuary of our souls, where adoration is offered in spirit and in truth. There selfish wishes and self-contemplation are stifled and all desires of self-love. There we eat the bread of life, there we are nourished by the pure substance of eternal Truth; there the Word-made-Flesh gives Himself to us as our interior Word, as our speech, our wisdom, our life, our being, our all."[56]

2. "My God, how I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed such great things to me by the mouth of Thy servants: my soul needed all this teaching. Doubtless the true Flesh and Blood of Thy Divine Son were necessary for me, since it is by His blessed Humanity that Thou willest to save me, and by it that I need to participate in Thy Divine Nature, but there are yet other meanings in this word Eucharist—every celestial gift, every Divine inspiration, every good thought, every work worthy of Thee."[57] "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever honest, whatsoever just, whatsoever pure, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good report":[58] each of these is a true Eucharist, a receiving of Christ the good, the true and the beautiful. And when I believe in Thee, O my God, I eat, or rather Thou dost incorporate me into Thyself.[59] And when I love Thee, I receive Thee as the life of my soul, and when my heart aspires through desire, it is a communion with Thy invisible beauty. Thus I can communicate all day long. "What is it to eat Christ?" says S. Augustine. "It is not only to receive His Body in the Sacrament, but it is to dwell in Him, and to possess Him in oneself by love."[60] Is this not in fact the words of the Gospel? "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "Behold I stand at

[56] Fénélon, *Manuel de piété (pour l'Ascension)*, t. VI., p. 466. Edit. Dupanloup.
[57] V. Suarez, *De Euchar.*, disp. 46, sent. 2.
[58] Phil. iv. 8.
[59] Innocent III. quoted above.
[60] S. Aug., *S. John*, Tr. XXVII., Ch. VI. 1.

the door and knock, if any man . . . . . and open the door, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."[61] "The life of the just," says Origen, "is a perpetual Eucharist, he eats uninterruptedly the bread of life, the Word of God, the eternal Wisdom, and the more he eats, the more this food abounds in him, and he ought to become in his turn a sort of Eucharist for his brethren, a divine nourishment which communicates itself by his words and his works."[62]

"O Divine Eucharist! O Sacrament of Love! In speaking thus I do not take away from the truth of thy mystery. No! I believe in thee as I believe in the Incarnation. But Christ Himself, and the friends of Christ have taught me that whilst remaining truth, thou art thyself only a preparation, a ladder, a means of ascending higher to the regions of the invisible. Thou art the way that leads thither but the end of the journey is the Word in His Divine splendour.

"Grant, O my God, that we may receive with reverence this Manna of the desert, which contains Thy true Body, and Thy true Blood, but grant that this Food which belongs at the same time to the body and to the mind, may cause us to grow daily, that It may make us understand all that is beautiful in the Divine order, that It may make us understand the true feeding upon the Word, and that It may prepare us for those great feasts of Eternity, when there will be sacraments no longer, but when the glory of the Word will be our food, His love our drink, and where we shall rest in the very life of God."[63]

[61] Rev. iii. 20.
[62] Origen *in Levit.*, hom. XVI. 5.
[63] *Ibid.*, *in Numbers*, hom. XI., No. 6. Edit. Migne.

LECTURE II.

ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS OF UNBELIEVING PHILOSOPHY.

"To whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed? or who hath known her wise counsels?"—*(Ecclus. i. 6.)*

When God has spoken, it would seem that man ought to be silent; the unlearned follow this rule even before the marvellous workings of an intelligent mind, or genius, and man with his highest knowledge must always be an ignoramus before the Eternal. When God therefore has expressed His Will to work a wonder, the creature ought to be humble and believe; it is so natural that God should do things incomprehensible to our mind, since we witness daily the thoughts and actions of men of genius which are beyond the reach of ordinary minds. This is true, but man is the child of her who first asked curious questions in the earthly paradise; he ought to be silent, but he will speak. He ought to believe without understanding, as he has to do a thousand times daily in most ordinary matters; but no, he will reason, will draw unwarrantable conclusions, and then exhibit a foolish irrationality on questions of which he cannot be a judge, because they are above him, and he does not know their primary elements. Still, *if* man asked questions with the respectful curiosity of the child who desires to know only that he may love more, his desire would be excusable, it would even be noble, and praiseworthy; for when man loves the light, and his inquiring gaze is prompted by the heart, it is worthy of God and of man. Thus the seraphic Doctors have not feared from time to time to raise the veil which hides the Holy of Holies, in order that some rays may shine

into the darkness of this world. In order to satisfy these natural desires of intelligent minds, and without that bold presumption which would seem to summon God before man's tribunal, and demand of Him an account of His works, we will take a general glance at the objections raised against the mystery of the Eucharist, and show that they have no real logical value.

To divide these considerations into three points:— 1. Human knowledge has no right to make an objection to the doctrine of the Eucharist—because 2. What theology teaches, or at least suggests as to the manner in which Jesus Christ is present in the divine Eucharist cannot explain but serves to give us an insight into the mystery. 3. While following the doctrine of the Fathers, we may seek and find in nature's symbols, many mysteries analogous to those of the Eucharist...

I.

1. Christian philosophers have imagined ingenious systems to explain the HOW of the Eucharistic mystery: these systems have the advantage and the inconvenience of all systems: they are inconvenient, inasmuch as they do not perhaps contain the true key to the mystery; but they have the advantage of enabling the mind to rest in this thought: that the human mind, even in the midst of the shadows of this life, has been able to find a method of conciliation in things Divine. What will it be then to be enlightened by the very light of God? I will content myself with first defying human science to make any serious objection to the possibility of the Eucharistic Mystery; and secondly with showing that the decisions of faith on this mystery have even to the eyes of reason greater clearness than most people suppose.

All sensible men will admit, that before pronouncing one of two ideas to be absurd, it is necessary to know the objects represented by these ideas. It would be

impossible, if we did not know the nature of a circle and of a square, to say that the following proposition is absurd: "a circle is square." So also before daring to pronounce that the Eucharistic is impossible, it is necessary to know:

(1) The nature and essence of matter, and all the modifications it can undergo. (2) The nature of *glorified* matter. (3) what the Sacramental Presence of Jesus Christ is, that is to say, the manner in which the Divine Saviour is really present in the Eucharist. "We do not know the whole of anything," said Montaigne. Our eyes see the exterior properties of bodies, and touch the shell of creation, but the depths of material existence, its substance[1] and its diverse activities, the invisible power which is the cause of visible phenomena,—all this we ignore or know in a superficial way only.[2] It is undoubtedly true, that man daily discovers in matter new qualities which confound the imagination. If anyone had foretold a hundred years ago, all the properties of steam, and the revolution it would effect in the world, he would have been considered a visionary, and if he had seriously predicted that with a little electric fluid we should be able to transmit our thoughts many thousand miles distant, in a moment of time, we should probably have feared for the equilibrium of his brain, and the normal condition of his mind.

Nevertheless, these properties of steam and electricity are to-day perfectly incontestable, and we smile at the imperfect physics of our ancestors. "What is matter?" says a philosopher, "what is mind?" These questions are insoluble; we do not know the interior

[1] See Translator's Preface.

[2] We ignore a considerable part of the properties of matter, or to speak in more scientific language, there still remain to be explained a whole series of phenomena depending on forces of which we have at present no idea; and this gap makes any complete and unified system impossible. (Note from De Humboldt *Kosmos,* t. 1, page 81.)

of things. Our senses can only grasp the SURFACE, and do not know how to penetrate that which is BENEATH, *that which we call* SUBSTANCE,[3] a word employed to designate, in all circumstances, that which we do not comprehend, but which we know must exist, and to which are attached the sensible qualities which affect us and which alone are within our power of apprehension.[4]

2. If we do not know all the properties of matter even in its normal state, and all the modifications which it may undergo, what shall we say of that matter which we believe to be raised by Divine power to a supernatural and glorious sphere? Yet consider what matter becomes under the influence of man's genius. Under the action of genius, nature seems transformed, and to acquire properties which it had not before. Thus, a drop of water, which rests in the smallest hollow of a stone, becomes by the action of fire, a powerful and terrible fluid, occupying fourteen thousand times more space than before, and yet is still the same body. Once formed of drops scarcely perceptible, hanging from the leaves of the forest, resting in the cup of a flower, or serving as a fresh drink to the birds of heaven; it becomes the most formidable agent of man, it overturns obstacles, it crushes out man's life, and even iron itself cannot resist its violence. There is another phenomenon in an inverse sense: an invisible and almost imponderable gas is condensed by the efforts of science; it becomes a part of the solid and inert stone which rests in our quarries. Again, learned man has forced metals to set free a mysterious power, a secret virtue which develops by mere touch, and lo! man acting from a distance of many thousand leagues, can send out his thoughts in all the region of this vast universe.

[3] The author here forestalls the instruction he gives in the second part.

[4] Portalès, *De l'usage et de l'abus*, t. I., Ch. IX., p. 237—Ch. VI., p. 178—179.

These are the works of man's genius, not to speak of all the new wonders which are reserved for future ages; possibly the genius of man prepares yet more astonishing marvels, which would frighten the present generation, if they were revealed beforehand!

The Christian believes that after the resurrection, the human body will be raised to such a state of glory, that it will almost enjoy spiritual qualities. It will be *impassible,* that is to say, exempt from all pain and corruption; *subtle,* that is, able to penetrate other bodies like an unperceived fluid; and to enjoy complete and easy organic action; *agile,* that is, able to move without fatigue, without hindrance, in the twinkling of an eye to immeasurable distances; *luminous,* that is to say, spreading radiance around it, like a star which shines continuously without exhausting its brilliance. "In a word," says S. Bonaventura, "glorified bodies will have all the properties of light, which is shining, incorruptible, penetrative, and traverses instantaneously the greatest distances."[5]

Such is to be the corporeal glory of the least of the elect, and yet some Christians cast a doubt on the marvellous properties of the Body of Jesus Christ glorified by the Father's Almighty Power! You cannot conceive what will one day be the power, the beauty and the miraculous qualities of your own flesh, and yet you dare to contest the power of the actual Flesh of Jesus Christ, that sacred Flesh to which we may specially apply the words of Tertullian. "It is the ordinance of the genius of God, the covering of His Breath, the queen of Creation."[6]

The impossibilities of nature are made an objection, but we may reply with Leibnitz, "that the nature of things is only the skill of God, and that according to the desires of His Wisdom, extraordinary skill is as easy to Him as ordinary skill."[7] Again we cry out

[5] S. Bonav., quoted by *Corn. à Lapid., 1 Cor. xv. on v. 44.*
[6] Tertull., *On the Resurrection of the Body,* Ch. IX.
[7] Leibnitz, *Syst. théol.,* p. 103. Edit. Lacroix.

with Tertullian—"What! You dare to defend nature against God? but nature is the property of God, and the meanest of proprietors has surely the right to change as he thinks best, the arrangements of his house."[8] We do not contest the rights of genius, anyone who dared to cast doubts on these would be received with irony or contempt, and yet men think it reasonable to contest the right of God. The superior man is qualified to do things which the ordinary do not understand. Shall we dare to refuse God the rights that we allow daily to men of genius, and claim that such a marvel is absurd, because we do not understand it? Surely this would be intolerable pretension; equally proud and unreasonable.

Reason and philosophy then have no right to take serious objection to the Eucharist; but besides this, the teaching, or at least the suggestions of the Faith as to the manner in which Jesus Christ is present in the divine Eucharist, may serve, not indeed to make us fully understand, but to allow us at least a glimpse of the mystery.

II.

1. Catholics admit that the Body of Jesus Christ is really and substantially present in the Divine Eucharist, but that It is there in a condition and mode of abode equally difficult for the human mind to conceive. Theologians and philosophers have tried to explain this mode of presence, and we must praise their zeal, when it respects the limits imposed by God, for a reasonable system which explains a mystery is a feeble light, which leaves many dark corners in a question, but anyhow, it *is* a light.

All the same, not one of these systems is perhaps the truth, or at least the complete truth. "The faith," as a celebrated theologian has remarked, "is always simple, but the additions of man are for the most part

[8] Tertull., *Against Marcion.* See especially Bk. II., Ch. VII.

difficult and complicated."[9] But, since nothing has been clearly and certainly laid down by the Church as to the manner of Jesus Christ's Presence in the Eucharist, except that He is there really and substantially, what serious objection can anyone make in this respect? the most elementary logic ought, in the name of common sense, to command silence.

The Catholic Faith teaches us, and here I am only repeating the doctrine of all great theologians and especially S. Thomas Aquinas, that the Body of Jesus Christ is not in the Eucharist with its accidents according to natural conditions, such as length, height, weight; that It has not the properties of extension, that It does not exist in this Sacrament after the manner of bodies, that It dwells there in condition of substance, and that it is the substance of bread which is changed into the substance of His Body.[10] [11] The Faith teaches us that the Body of Jesus Christ is really in the Eucharist, but that It is not there after the

[9] Le Père Peronne, *De Euchar.*, 1st Part, Ch. I., t. II., p. 206. Edit. Migne.

[10] If we analyse the thought of substance we find it is entirely independent of quantity on which depends size or extension, for the smallest grain of gold is as truly gold as all the precious metal in the world. Quantity is a thing of sense, which the eye sees, the touch proves, but substance is only revealed by reason. Let God only reduce a body to the state of pure substance and it ceases to have extent without ceasing to be a body—it is by extension that a body becomes subject to the laws of space, remove extension and the body shares the prerogatives of a spirit. . . . This, then, is what God has done for the Body of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, it is then free from attachment to any particular place. It is not so much a multiplied locality as freedom from locality. It dwells in the Host like a spirit. It only enters the region of space indirectly by the species, as the soul is in the body. Who dare say this implies contradiction and is beyond the power of the Almighty. (Note from Dalgairn's *Holy Communion.* Part I., Chap. II., pp. 32, 33. See also p. 34: Body itself has an immaterial element . . . . . the mind alone.)

[11] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, Part III., Qu. 75, Art. 1, Ans. 3, p. 265. *Eng. Trans.* by Dominican Fathers.

manner of bodies, "that the mode of presence cannot be perceptible either to the senses or to the imagination, but solely to the intelligence which is the eye of the soul," to translate S. Thomas.[12] "As to His mode of Presence," says Suarez, "we may say that Christ is incorporeally and invisibly present, which, however, does not in any way hinder His real and substantial Presence."[13] This is what made S. Thomas, Bellarmine, and many others, say that the Body of Jesus Christ is spiritually in the Eucharist, that is, after the manner of spirits.[14] In the same way, S. Ambrose uses these expressions. "The Body of Christ is a spiritual Body, and not a corporal nourishment."[15] And Pierre de Blois: "Although the Body of Christ be in one place by Its corporeal nature, nevertheless, It is in many places by Its Divine and spiritual virtue. . . ."

2. It will be necessary here[16] in order to understand this fundamental doctrine, to come to a clear understanding about two parts which belong to all bodies and in the old scholastic terms are called Substance and Accidents. Substance is that interior force, which, according to the etymology of the word, is hidden under exterior appearances, and which, independently of size and quantity, makes one body to differ from another. Take a grain of corn, or a diamond, put on one side the form, colour and weight of these bodies, there is something beneath them that our eye does not see, there is a secret force, or energy, which constitutes these material things in one nature rather than another. "Substance," says S. Thomas, "is indivisible in itself . . . the corporeal eye cannot see it, it comes within the range of no sense, it even

[12] S. Thomas, *Ibid.*, Qu. 76, Art. 1, Ans. 3. . . . Art. 3, "I answer," etc., p. 291. . . . Qu. 81, Art. IV., p. 410—411. *Ibid.*, Art. 7, "I answer," etc., p. 300.

[13] Suarez, *Disp.*, Part III., 46, Sec. 4.

[14] Bellarmine, *De Euchar.*, Bk. I., Ch. II., p. 186.

[15] S. Ambrose, *On the Mysteries,* Ch. IX., No. 58 paragraph.

[16] See Translator's Preface.

escapes the imagination, it can only be perceived by the mind."[17] "There must be," says Leibnitz, "everywhere in bodies, indivisible and incorruptible substances, something in fact corresponding to souls. The accidents, on the contrary, are the exterior forms of the body, its size, its quantity, and generally all that strikes the senses, all that corresponds with extension."[18] Now we say that even in natural bodies, the substance is entirely different from the accidents. The substance of any body has in itself neither extension nor the dimensions of quantity; it is an active, simple force,[19] an internal energy, which has no essential connection with the properties of matter which touch the senses. It is doubtless in this sense that S. Chrysostom said: "There is much spiritual essence in bodies. Take a single grain of wheat, a single drop of wine; you will possess all the substance of corn and wine, as much as if you collected together the produce of all the fields and all the vines in the world. Wheat has been the food of man for six thousand years; this bread of earthly life has multiplied its material quantity under all forms, and with a marvellous fertility; but in itself, the whole substance of wheat has neither been increased nor diminished; it has always remained the same from the first hour when God created the first grain of corn."

Substance, then, we must remember, is the invisible force or principle entirely separate from quantity and extension, which gives to this entity the name and the

[17] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, Part III., Art. 7, p. 300.

[18] Leibnitz, *Essay on Rel. Phil.*, p. 186. *Ibid.*, *Letter to M. Armault*, p. 167. Edit. Berlin. Leibnitz, considering such an evident truth need not be proved, contents himself with saying, "There must be simple substances if there are compound; for a compound is only an aggregation of simples. Therefore, where there is no part, no extension form or divisibility is possible."

[19] See on this subject the *Philosophical works* of Leibnitz, with Intro. by M. Janeti.

property of wheat.[20] [21] The quantity of matter, its exterior form, its material covering, the fulness or thinness of the ears of corn may vary indefinitely, but the substance, that interior or hidden force which makes it wheat, remains the same; it remains as invariable in one grain of corn as in the immense stores of public granaries; it is the same in the sandy mountains of barren regions, as on the rich low hills of Africa. It is independent of number, of quantity, and of molecular form.[22] [23]

This principle is of sovereign importance, for in it is to be found the key of the mystery. What we are developing is only a summary of the doctrine spread throughout the different works of S. Thomas, to whom Christ said one day: "Thou hast written well concerning Me, and specially on the Sacrament of My Love."[24]

We will suppose that we are given a single drop of excellent wine; after having carried it to our lips, we know all the substance of wine, as well as if we had drunk the entire cupful. Substance is in the depth of its nature, immovable as the centre point of a circle which corresponds to all the moving points of the circumference, however much we may extend the latter. To repeat the fine expression of Leibnitz, "There are indivisible essences, incorruptible, possessing something corresponding with souls," and we may apply in a sense, to every natural body, what is said

[20] Cardinal Cusa, *De Doct. Ignor.*, Bk. I., Ch. III., p. 3.

[21] In order to conceive the glorification of Christ's Body we must consider what the human body really is. The human body consists of a certain force which is found animating matter and filling it with certain powers which cannot be found elsewhere. . . The grossness, heaviness, weariness, immobility of our material frame arises from the dead matter with which we are associated. Our true body is the force which struggles to act through the medium. Translator's note from Father Benson's *The Life Beyond the Grave,* Chap. LIV., div. 3, p. 637—8.

[22] *Vide* S. Thomas, 3rd Part, Qu. 76, Art. 1, Ans. 3.

[23] Works of Mgr. de Pressy, Vol. I., p. 1175.

[24] Card. Vaughan, *S. Thom. Aq. Life,* Ch. XVI., p. 379.

of the Body of Jesus Christ under the sacramental form. "It remains entire and invariable in its substance, in the midst of the variation of exterior elements."[25]

To conclude, substance is everywhere in some way hidden under the accidents, or matter, and it seems to be a general law of creation; everywhere we notice correlative elements, everywhere there is an exterior phenomenon and a latent force or energy, that which catches the eye and the being hidden beneath. It belongs to the mind to penetrate within, and to seize the truth of things hidden under their covering. "It is thus," says S. Thomas, "that under the accidents of every being, its substantial nature is hidden, under words is hidden their true signification, and under similitudes and comparisons the truth is figured."[26] [27]

3. We say that the substance of bread and wine, always the same, always invariable in spite of the continued change of the accidents and exterior forms, shows us, under the form of an image, what happens to the substance of the Body of Jesus Christ, really present in the Eucharist, but without the ordinary form of its natural accidents. This substance of the Body of the Saviour remains invariable whatever may be the number of the consecrated Hosts. We can no more explain this mystery, than we can explain how the substance in a single grain of corn, in a single drop of wine, is absolutely the same, as in all the products of the earth during six thousand years, and how this substance is not more complete, nor more divided, in millions of atoms, than in a single atom. . . . .[28]

Note carefully that we are not told that the Body of Jesus Christ is found in each consecrated Host with the dimensions of quantity and size: it is simply said that it is the substance of His True Body, and that the

[25] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum.*, 3rd Part, Qu. 76, Art. IV., Ans. 1.
[26] *Ibid., Sum.*, 2nd Part, Qu. 8, Art. I.
[27] Joubert *Pensées*, tit. XII., No. 8, p. 314, 2nd edit.
[28] See above in text. S. Thom. Aq., *Sum.*, 3rd Part, Qu. 76.

Body is there entirely, but in mode of substance.[29] "The Body of Jesus Christ only exists with Its properties of extension and dimension in one place, that is, in Heaven."[30]

The Body of Jesus Christ is enclosed in the species, in the same way that the substance of bread was there before Consecration. "Christ in this Sacrament is neither engendered, nor changed, nor augmented, but He remains entire in His substance."[31]

We must thoroughly understand this doctrine of transubstantiation, for through not understanding this mystery, we can be led to absurd conclusions, contrary to the dogma itself. This happens sometimes, even amongst Catholics.

Thus the Body of our Lord is not changed by the Act of Consecration. It does not descend from heaven. It is not bruised. It is and remains incorruptible, the injuries of men, like accidents which attack our bodies, cannot reach It. There is simply a changing of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of the Body and the Blood. A changing, for the substance of bread is not destroyed, it is changed, transformed, or to speak more clearly, trans-substantiated, and by this change of the substance, says S. Thomas, the bread takes on a more noble existence, since it is taken up into the glorious Body of Christ. The accidents of the bread remain, namely, all that is not substance, and as Suarez says, there remain of the bread and the wine, all that has an entity distinct from the substance. This is so true that the species of bread and wine which remain after the Consecration, have a nutritive power; they are then something real and distinct. "The Consecration," says S. Thomas, "leaves them the properties belonging to matter."[32]

[29] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, 3rd Part, Qu. 76, Art. V., p. 295—Art. VII., p. 300.

[30] *Ibid., Cont. Gent.*, Bk. IV., Ch. LXIV—*Sum. Theo.*, Part III., Qu. 76, Art. V., Ans. 1, p. 296.

[31] See Billuart, *On the Eucharist*, diss. IV., Art. II., p. 282.

[32] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum.*, 3rd Part, Qu. 77, Art. IV., p. 314.

4. From this we gather that the Body of Jesus Christ is in the Eucharist in a very different manner from that of His Presence in Heaven; in Heaven He exists in His natural human body in the greatness and visible qualities which distinguished Him on earth;[33] these qualities are still further perfected by the light of glory, and one of the joys of eternity will be to see and embrace that glorified Flesh which resembles our own.

In the Sacrament, Jesus Christ is present in the substance of His Body,[34] after an invisible manner, the manner in which the soul is present in our body. From this it follows that it is the same body which was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and which has suffered for us, and yet in another sense it is not the same, says S. Augustine. It is the same in substance, and not the same in visible form.[35] Thus Bossuet says, "Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is so truly a human body in substance, but so unlike in its qualities, that one may say that It is one, and that It is not one in many respects; that in one sense, only thinking of the substance, It is the very Body of Jesus Christ born of Mary, but that in another sense, considering the manner, It is another, which He Himself makes by His Word."[36]

S. Augustine expresses the same meaning when he puts the following words into the mouth of our Lord: "Understand after a spiritual manner what I have just said unto you: you will not eat this Body which you see, you will not drink this Blood which will be shed upon the Cross. It is a Sacrament that I have described, understand it in a spiritual manner, and it will give you life. It must be celebrated visibly, but you must understand it invisibly."[37] Elsewhere the

[33] First Part of Black Rubric after Holy Communion Service. Book of Common Prayer. See Billuart, *On the Eucharist,* discuss. I., Art. IV.

[34] S. Cyril of Alexandria, *On S. Luke,* Ch. XXII., t. V.

[35] S. Augustine, *Trea. on S. John,* Trac. XXVI., 12—13.

[36] Bossuet, quoted by Mgr. Pressy, t. 1, p. 105.

[37] S. Aug., *Ps. 98, No. 9.*

same Father says: "The Body of Jesus Christ will give you life, if you eat and drink in spirit and in truth, that which you receive in the Sacrament in a visible manner."[38]

The consideration of these details is the best way of replying to the objections of unbelief, and to manifest the true faith of the Church, it is also the best proof that the Church, while preserving faith in the reality of the substantial presence, is as spiritual as possible in her Eucharistic worship, and that she thus moves between the extreme literal and carnal sense of the people of Capernaum and the extreme of those who lose the truth of the Sacrament in unreal metaphor.[39] These thoughts have the advantage of restoring the true meaning to words of the Fathers, which our adversaries have used against us; words very difficult to understand if our explanations, which are the summary of Catholic tradition, are not admitted: but words on the contrary very easy to grasp if having a safe light we do not fear to penetrate into the depths of this mystery. No explanations can remove all the clouds which are necessary to faith here below, but at least, the clouds are sufficiently lighted up, and the soul obtains a glimpse of what she will one day contemplate clearly amid the glories of heaven.

5. Now examine a similar mystery in nature, a mystery which occurs daily without notice, and which recalls the Eucharist; for how true it is that there is a silent harmony between creation and the highest sphere of supernatural life! Happy those indeed who realise it.

What happens when the labourer throws the seed into the ground? Have you ever thought of it? He prepares a real Eucharistic mystery in the natural order. He gives to the grain of corn, through the fertility of the soil, the power of multiplying itself, of assimilating to itself by moisture the elements of the

[38] S. Aug., *Ibid., On S. John,* Trac. XXVII., 5, 6.
[39] Corn. à Lapide, *In Matth.,* Ch. XXVI., v. 26, p. 481.

earth, and of changing them into its own substance. It is a real marvel of transubstantiation in the natural order. He gives the seed the opportunity of changing the dust of the fields into more seeds of corn in their turn, and in such manner as our thought can multiply indefinitely. Meanwhile, the substance of the corn remains always the same; in its essential being it has neither augmented nor diminished; and if, at this moment, all the granaries in the Universe were burnt and only a single grain of corn escaped the fire, the substance of corn would be as complete, as entire as before, and, if consigned to the earth, would renew the same wonders of indefinite multiplication.

We say that this is a mystery, yet it is realised daily under our very eyes! Ought we, then, to be surprised to find a like mystery on the heights of the supernatural world? And let us not forget, that the Word of God calls Himself a seed. "The Seed is the Word of God." Cannot the Eternal Seed, He Who has given to all earthly germs their fertile activity, cannot He have the same energy as the atom of material corn?[40]

Our Fathers in the Faith loved to study these symbols, and they saw in them continuous proofs of our Creed, proofs that nature itself furnishes,[41] and, therefore, cannot be suspected of being man's invention. "It need not astonish us," says Albert the Great, "that God so preserves His Flesh that the communion of the faithful neither diminishes nor consumes It. We have an evidence of this in nature: for many thousands of years man has eaten wheaten bread, and yet, not only does the wheat not diminish, but there is much more than at the first. If, then, by means of agriculture, God thus preserves and multiplies seed, why should we be astonished at the Eucharistic mystery?" "In each seed," says S. Augustine, "there is a hidden

[40] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.,* Part III., Qu. 44, Art. IV., Ans. 4.

[41] Albert the Great. From *De Sacram Altaris,* Inter opusc, S. Thom. Aq., 69, Ch. IX., p. 63. Rom. Edit.

and harmonious force which possesses the property of attracting all to itself; outwardly the germ has only a mean appearance, but within there is a secret force which transforms the matter subjected to its action, and which prepares the fruit." "And it is thus," says S. Augustine elsewhere, "that the miracle of the loaves in the desert is to be explained; these loaves were like a seed, which was not entrusted to the ground, but which, in the Hands of Christ, produced marvels still more astonishing than if they had borrowed their fertile multiplication from the depths of the earth."[42]

Let us follow the same line of thought and consider more of nature's symbols which can help us if not to understand at least to foresee the Eucharist.

III.

Human science is in its infancy, nevertheless, the child lisps in imperfect language what he will say later, by the light of matured reason.

"Let us behave like children," says S. Francis de Sales, "since we are children";[43] some day in Heaven we shall know the true theology of the Word. And although the mystery of the Eucharist is above all the marvels of nature, let us try at least to get some glimpses of it in the mirror of creation. The comparison is not the direct view of the truth, but it is a language most in harmony with our double nature; it is a true voice of God; it is poetry from above, it is the true literature of Heaven, since, as the Angelic Doctor said, that which exists in God in a spiritual manner is written in visible characters on the material creation.[44] To study truth by comparison, is to spell more or less perfectly the Divine book, and as Tertullian has said, we can by the lights of nature penetrate into the things of God so as to bear witness to the truth.[45] Such has

[42] S. Augustine, *On S. John,* Ch. VI., Trac. XXIV., No. 1.
[43] S. Francis de Sales, letter 754.
[44] S. Thom. Aq., *Ep. ad Heb.* Ch. IX., lec. I., t. VII.
[45] Tertullian, *De resurr., carn.,* Ch. XII., p. 235. Edin. Edit.

always been the method of the Fathers, and of the Church's great theologians.

Faber develops very well these ideas. "God is hid everywhere in nature as in the Eucharist . . . natural laws are like the sacramental 'accidents,' they veil God."[46]

2. "Daily," says a holy Doctor, "do we see man take bread and wine, and change it into his own substance." It is one of the parables of nature which most nearly approaches to the mystery of the Eucharist. Every day when taking a meal, we assimilate bread and wine, that is to say, these two substances are introduced into our digestive organs, and there, by a marvellous and inexplicable virtue, they are changed: they pass through an astonishing metamorphosis, they become the very substance of the human being, they are animated by the soul's breath, and marked by its divine seal; they seem to be spiritualised, they can be justly called the messengers of our thoughts, co-operators in our most immaterial acts. With this continual wonder, daily enacted before our eyes, dare we refuse to the Word of God, the power over the elements of bread and wine, which He Himself has granted to the fibres of our organic constitution, and which we exercise every moment in a manner as powerful as it is easy?

S. Gregory of Nyssa has some fine thoughts on the subject, and we cannot but admire the instinct for truth by which the Fathers of the Church found symbols of our sublime faith in the most ordinary phenomena of nature. They seem to have had the constant idea of scrutinising the facts of the natural world, and of suspending them like a silver lamp to light up from below the higher phenomena of the heavenly world.[47]

[46] Faber, F. W., *The Blessed Sacrament*, Bk. III., Sec. III., pp. 320, 321, 328, 344, 352—354.

[47] Gen. xv. 17.

The holy Doctor's thought is as follows: "Bread and wine are the basis, the root of the human body, they are the power of the human body, as philosophers say, for the food which I have just taken is soon changed into my own substance, and will become my body. We may, therefore, consider bread and wine as the primary elements of our material being, and these elements only need preparation to become human substance. Jesus Christ living on earth had an organisation, it is true, more perfect, but nevertheless similar to our own, consequently He took bread and wine in order to sustain life, and these two substances, by a natural operation were changed daily into the corporeal substance of the Son of God; and as this Divine Body was animated by the virtue of the Eternal Word, this marvellous transformation of nourishment resulted in Jesus Christ Himself. We could not, therefore, hesitate to admit that bread can be changed to-day into the Body of the Lord; it is an operation analogous to that which took place in the past in the Sacred Humanity of Christ: only it is not produced slowly as in the past, and by the operation of corporeal assimilation; it is the instantaneous result of the Almighty's word."[48]

3. We shall find a still more perfect symbol of the Eucharist in man's highest power—where he is indeed king of nature. Everything is relative here below, there is a meeting place for the Infinite and a grain of sand; with how much greater reason between man and God, since man is of Divine race.

God is power, that is the Father, He is Intelligence and Thought, that is the Son; He is Love, that is the Holy Spirit. In the same way man lives, he knows, he loves; existence is as the power of his being; but this power would be blind if it did not come to unite the power of our being with that other part which is intelligence, our soul would be divided, and the power of the human ego resides in the unity of these three

[48] S. Gregory of Nyssa, *Orat. Catech.*, Ch. XXXVII., t. II., p. 94. Edit. Migne.

faculties. Man is then a living trinity, the image of the one and undivided Trinity.

Let us isolate in thought the faculty which gives man a special resemblance to the Word of God; namely, the mind. Man can think; by this sublime faculty he approaches God, and the Fathers teach that man, in his quality of a reasonable being, is like the Word of God, that he is the shadow of the Word. By thought, man is greater than the material heavens; by thought he can mount to the Throne of God and say to the Word: "I am a reflection of Thy splendour. This thought which is the glory of my being, I can retain in my inmost soul. I can also embody it, incarnate it in a sound, produce it exteriorly, and shed it around me as an effusion of my being; thus I form as it were a picture of the Incarnation." If we listen to the Fathers, we delight to find how these ideas are as ancient as Catholic tradition. "The word which I communicate to you," said S. Augustine, "I first myself possessed in silence; it then flowed out to you, nevertheless, it has not left me. In the same way, the Word was manifested under a suitable form, nevertheless He did not leave the bosom of His Father. My interior Word was in me, and then it was produced under the form of a voice; in the same way the Word of God was in the bosom of the Father, and He was manifested in the Flesh."[49] "The hidden word enclosed in man's mind," says S. Thomas, "is manifested by a sensible expression; in the same way the Word Who was hidden in the bosom of the Father was manifested in His Flesh."[50]

"There are," says S. Bonaventura, "the greatest affinities between human thought and the Word of God. The Son proceeds naturally from the Father, He is like Him; in the same way thought proceeds naturally from the spirit; it resembles the spirit, it has even received the name of conception of the spirit.

[49] S. Aug., *Homily 119* (Ben.), p. 508, Sec. VII. Oxford Edit.
[50] S. Thom. Aq., *in Epis. 1 Tim.*, Ch. III., lect. 3, t. VII.

Man disposes all things by his thought, in the same way God has disposed all by His Word. Finally, thought is united to voice in order to be manifested, and this union operates, without thought being changed into voice, or leaving the seat of the spirit. In the same way, the Eternal Word united Himself to Flesh, nevertheless, He was not changed into flesh, He remained wholly in the bosom of the Father."[51]

The Fathers of the Church have always understood the teaching of religion in this manner, they sought the proof of truth, the greatness of religion and the greatness of man, in his mind.

There exist, then, deep and intimate relations between human thought and the Word of God, between human thought incarnate in a sound, and the Word of God incarnate in human flesh.[52]

4. Pass on from these resemblances with the mystery of the Incarnation, to the analogous relations with the Eucharist, by first translating several passages from S. Augustine. "Notice the mysteries of my speech," says this holy Doctor, "I nourish your souls while I speak to you, and I nourish you with my thought which is incarnated in my voice. If I gave you a purely material nourishment, it would not come to each one of you as a whole, it would be necessary to divide it into pieces, and each would receive less or more according to the number of the guests. It is not the same with the moral nourishment which my speech gives you. I say to your souls receive, take, be nourished, you receive the food of the mind, and it is not divided; that which I say belongs in its entirety to the whole world, and wholly to each one. . . . My hearers do not divide my discourse, so that one takes the first part and another the second, or that the syllables have to be shared. No, one hears all, two

[51] S. Bonavent., *1 Sent. Dist. 27,* Pt. II., Art. I., Qu. 4. Edit. Venise.

[52] S. Aug., *Homily,* Ch. XIX., Sec. 7, p. 507. Oxford Edit.

hear all, many hear all, without missing a letter, and if the number of the audience were increased, still no division would take place. My speech is sufficient for all, and each receives the whole. Your ears are prepared to hear, and the ear of your neighbour, who is listening in no way interferes with yours."[53] If my mind thus reveals to me such mysteries shall I dare to contest the right of the Word of God to give me the same assurances with regard to the power of His Flesh? And the more so, as, according to the same Doctor's language, the Flesh of Christ is as a sound in which He has placed the expression of His Love.

Man, then, has thought, which is the image of the Word. He incarnates it in a sound, in the same way as the Word took Flesh. This thought thus incarnated contains at the same time both matter and spirit. When produced outwardly, it comes whole to thousands of auditors. The nourishment which we give them is at the same time both bodily and spiritual; it is spiritual, since it is an effluence from our soul; it is corporeal, since it is incarnated in a sound, and nevertheless it is not like those foods which are given to us under entirely material forms. But not only spoken speech, printed speech, thought incarnate on paper, and under visible characters recalls the mystery of the Eucharist. Homer composed a poem, which is as the word, the speech of his genius; during centuries the pen has transcribed it thousands of times. Then printing came, seized this incarnate word of a man, and reproduced it millions of times in all sizes, with all printing accidents of ink and paper; and, nevertheless, it is always the same substance of the human thought which is hidden under the infinite variety of exterior forms. And yet God could not do with His Almighty Word what a machine does daily for the light breath of genius? A foreman at his printing press should have a power which we would refuse to the Eternal

[53] S. Aug., *On S. John.* Treatise XXXVII., Sec. IV., p. 474. Edin. Edit. *Ibid. Hom. 120.,* Sec. 3, p. 510. Oxford Edit.

One on His Throne! Truly it seems as if we had not thought it out!

5. It is true, I repeat again as I end, that there is a defective side, in such comparisons, but there are also many suggestions of resemblance. God allows us to have a glimpse of Divine mysteries, in the mirror of visible things: when man forces nature to reveal to him her treasures, he does not always see the consequence of his acts; but the Lord is there Who watches over science and commands it to be an echo of Heaven, for science is His property, and the reflection of His Glory.[54]

My desire has been to speak with a certain development on the greatest and sweetest of Christian mysteries. It has seemed to be my duty not to draw back before the difficulties which human science object to in theological mysteries.

What is our object in thus reviewing objections and difficulties? To feed a vain curiosity? To pry into the Eternal secrets? God forbid! Let us not forget the word of Holy Scripture. "He that searcheth into Thy Majesty, shall be overwhelmed by Thy Glory."[55] "But," says S. Bernard, "when we search into the glory of God with a pure and simple intuition, there is nothing to fear."[56] Has not the child the right to contemplate his father's face with love and respect, and the Face of God is the truth of things.

"Faithful soul," says S. Hilary, "plunge into the

[54] I can scarcely now say whether I was more overcome with thankfulness that Nature was so like Revelation or with wonder that Revelation was so like Nature. Nature, it is true, is a part of Revelation and one could have anticipated nothing but harmony here. But that a derived Theology . . . should be at bottom and in all cardinal respects so faithful a transcript of "the truth as it is in Nature" came as a surprise, and to me, at least, as a rebuke. (Translator's note from Prof. Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World.)* Preface, p. xvii.

[55] Prov. xxv. 27. Vulgate.

[56] S. Bernard, *Song of Songs,* Serm. 62, Sec. IV.

secrets of divine mysteries; seek, walk in the labyrinths, and be not weary. As for me, I live to act thus; I know that I can never reach the depths of the abyss, but at least I shall make some progress. He who searches into the mysteries of the Infinite will not always succeed in understanding them as he would, but at least he will ever advance along this path of light."[57]

[57] S. Hilary, *de Trin.*, Bk. II., No. 10, pp. 58—59. Edit. Migne.

LECTURE III.

THE SYMBOL OF BREAD.

"Melchisedeck offered bread and wine."—*Gen. xiv. 18.*

"THERE is one thing in Religion," says Tertullian, "which is a stumbling block to the earthly mind, i.e., on one hand the simplicity of the action, and on the other, the magnificence of the effects."[1] These words naturally occur to us when we think of the greatest mystery of Christianity; there truly, even more than in all other Divine Mysteries, is simplicity in act, and magnificence in effect. On the one hand, bread, and wine, on the other the Presence of God. It is the food of souls, their communion, and their participation in the Divine Nature. On the one hand, simple elements of material creation; on the other, a word which communicates to them supernatural virtue, and daily renews a miracle no human tongue can express. Formerly, God spoke, and chaos became fertile. Later the same God, ever simple in His acts, took bread and wine, and it became the most astonishing marvel of Redemption, the most abundant source of heavenly grace. The Almighty loves to act thus: so He manifests the strength of His Sovereignty, which can work the greatest marvels with the weakest instruments. His Word, which is the force of His Eternal activity, gives life to the nothingness of the creature.[2]

Nevertheless, the Wisdom of God Who loves simplicity, usually carries out His design in an orderly development, ruled by great principles of harmony which govern the movement of the worlds; for those principles of mutual analogy and symbolic parallel, are simply the Eternal Wisdom applied to the government

[1] Tertullian, *On Baptism,* Chap. II., p. 232. Edin. Edit.
[2] Heb. i. 3. "Upholding all things by the word of His power."

of the universe. "All wisdom cometh from the Lord . . . . . the height of heaven and the breadth of the earth. . . . He poured her out upon all His works."[3] In the order of grace, and especially in the Sacraments, the Word appears to have ever in mind a law which dominates creation, and which we may express thus: things of sense are a mirror, in which divine truths are reflected, and the soul alive to the workings of God, can easily study these truths of which the whole world is a reflection, these marvellous harmonies whose echoes resound from every part.[4]

Thus, in the Sacraments, everything is simple in outward appearance, yet the matter is chosen so as to foretell the effect of grace; this choice is not arbitrary, it is the application of a great general law which links all visible and invisible beings to the throne of God. When God willed to institute the Sacrament which cleanses, He takes from nature that element which removes the stains of material objects, when He wills to give Himself wholly to us in the Sacrament of His love, He takes that which signifies the most complete union,—food—the principle of vital renewal by bodily assimilation; and by these outward signs, says the Angelic Doctor, God leads us to the knowledge of Divine mysteries.[5] And elsewhere the same Doctor teaches, that there must be a correspondence between the outward signs and the effect produced by the Sacrament.

Jesus Christ said, in speaking of the Eucharist, "I am the Bread of Life. . . The Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed."[6] These words, both simple and profoundly mysterious, teach us the nature, the effects,

[3] Ecclus. i. 1—20.

[4] S. Thom. Aq., *Ep. ad Heb.*, Ch. IX. *Ibid., Sum. Theo.*, Part III., Qu. 66, Art. I.; Qu. 73, Art. I.

[5] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, Pt. III., Qu. 60, Art. 4. *Ibid.*—Art. 7., Ans. 2.

[6] S. John vi. 48, 51, 55.

and the Divine virtue of the most Blessed Sacrament. Food and drink, bread and wine! make the life of man. Therefore, the Saviour used these symbolic elements to institute the sacrament of supernatural life.

Let us develop the words of Christ . . . " My Flesh is meat indeed."

1. " It is written, man shall not live by bread alone." Man's soul, then, has need of a food suitable to its nature. The food of the soul! at this expression, an earthly man may smile, one who understands nothing, except that which is seen and touched; who has materialised his thoughts and his very existence, how should he understand the needs of the soul? Nevertheless, thanks be to God, there are many souls truly worthy of this name, who need food, and some by whom the need is felt more strongly and continually even than the appetites of the body; souls who are hungry and thirsty for that which is true, beautiful and noble, and in whom this hunger and thirst are at once a proof of greatness, and a noble unrest. And as the body exhausted with fatigue, needs to renew the life within, so these souls seem to lose some of their strength in the struggle of life, and there arises in them a perpetual desire for some higher principle which will quicken them, and repair their weakness.

2. What is the true food of the soul? Our feet touch the soil: and the earth furnishes the food of our body, through the corn confided to the furrows of the field. But our soul, which God has made in His own Image, in which He has sown the germs of eternal aspiration and of infinite needs, who can nourish that? Where are fields sufficiently fertile to prepare for it the wheat of Divine life? God Himself; He Who is Truth, Beauty, and the sum of all good, is the food of the soul: God in His Pure and Infinite existence during the age of eternity! God under veils and symbols, during the days of earthly exile! Yes, the soul of man needs the Divine table; and aspires to nothing less than to be nourished by the very substance

of God Himself.[7] This Communion with the Infinite makes all the glory and strength of our soul; it is this which gives to the Christian the fulness of moral life, and abundance of divine energy, and which fills the heart with the repose and calm of entire satisfaction. "What!" said S. Augustine, "men call themselves happy when they are seated at a splendid table, and they will not understand the happiness that comes from being nourished and refreshed with truth. Men think themselves happy when they breathe the sweet scent of plants and of perfumes, when their ears are fed by the sounds of harmony, when their eyes dilate with the clear radiance of light; and they smile incredulously when they are told that truth has incomparable perfumes, an interior harmony, which soothes all agitation, and a sweeter light than that of all the stars in the firmament."[8]

3. . . . Every created being requires nourishment, because he needs renewing! He does not find a sufficient source of life in himself, he is obliged to seek something to sustain his failing nature, and to keep alive the life which he feels to be escaping. The more perfect the nature of the creature is, so much the more does it seek a refined, delicate food, suited to that nature. S. Gregory and S. Cyril express perfectly these progressive lines of thought when they say: "Hay is the food of animals, but the Word is the food of the reasonable soul, as bread is the food proportioned to the nature of our bodies, so is the Word the food which suits the soul."[9] Yes, the little flower which receives the dew of the fields, and which extracts sweetness from the earth, the animal which seeks its food in the meadows, and the man seated at a banquet, all obey without doubt a general law of all beings, a sort of Eucharistic law, which forces every living

[7] Tertullian, *On the Resur. of the Body,* Ch. VIII., p. 230. Edin. Edit.
[8] S. Aug., *de lib. arbit,* Bk. II., No. 38, t. 1.
[9] S. Greg. Nyss., *In Cantic., Hom. 5,* p. 883. Edit. Migne.

creature to call for life, with which to refresh and strengthen his failing strength.[10] We might say that our existence is like a flying being which threatens every instant to leave or to fail us, and food is a kind of magnet which holds it back, or rather, it is the principle of its renewal.

But now a great wonder suggests itself to us! The more beings rise in the path of virtue by assimilating food, that is to say, justice, truth, and holiness, and the more excellent the forms of these divine attributes become, the more do they modify the nature which receives them: this made Origen say: "The more we advance in virtue, the better and more abundant things do we consume, until we come to partake of the same food as the Son of God."[11]

But we see here an essential difference in the effects produced by different kinds of food: when the food which we take is inferior to us, it is changed into us; if, on the contrary, it is of a more excellent nature, it changes us into itself. Thus, when I eat bread, I transubstantiate it into my being, because by my intellectual nature, I am superior to the wheat in the fields. But, if I receive God for my nourishment, eating has a contrary effect, it raises my own nature to a higher condition. From all these truths which form the basis of the Fathers' teaching, we gather that the whole universe is, even in the natural order, an immense Eucharistic banquet, in which every being receives its share of life under a more or less elementary form, with conditions of more or less great perfection; but all comes from God, the food of Angels, that of man in the order of nature and of grace, down to that of the ruminating animal life, there is nothing which is not an outpouring of Divine liberality.[12]

4. If bread is the food of the human body, as hay

[10] See Origène, *On John*, Vol. XIII., No. 33, 34.
[11] Origène, *Comment. on John*, Vol. XIII., No. 34.
[12] Ps. cxlvii. 8, 9.

is animals' food, truth, that is to say, the Word of God is the true nourishment of the soul. The Angels in Heaven, as immaterial spirits, receive this food in all its purity, detached from all sensible forms. "The Angels," says Origen, "are nourished by the Wisdom of God, and in the contemplation of truth, they gather strength to accomplish their mission."[13] "O Word," exclaims S. Augustine, "Thou Who art the food and the Bread of Angels, it is by Thee that the heavenly powers are full of substantial life; by Thee they are replenished, by Thee they live, and are wise and happy."[14] Such was also the condition of man in the Earthly Paradise, allowing for the difference of natures. "There the bread of man," says S. Gregory the Great, "was the enjoyment of the Divine Life, the continual communion with the Word of God, the joy of interior peace, the splendour of inaccessible light, Divine Love, and the presence of the Creator."[15]

But an abyss has been opened between God and humanity, and since the fall, man has been, so to speak, enveloped in matter, and lost in the darkness of the lower world. From this results the dominating life of the senses; which endeavours to drag man down; and those appetites which are grosser and more irregulated than even those of mere animals. But God, in His infinite mercy, had resolved to raise the world out of its degradation, and to link it by a chain of love to the throne of His Eternity. God was the prodigal's father, and it was necessary that the child should remember the family table; the banquet is a sign of union, the memory of parental affection and a child's tender needs. But man being lost in sensuality, and also by nature composed of body and soul, could not be brought back at once to the region of pure spirits, or receive truth in its pure essence. Besides, a return to God by penitence, and by ways of progressive initia-

[13] Origen, *De Orat.*, Ch. XXVII., t. 1. p. 514. Edit. Migne.
[14] S. Aug., *Serm. 196*, No. 3, t. V., p. 1309.
[15] S. Gregory, *In V. Psal. Poenit.*, No. 7, p. 607. Edit. Migne.

tion, had become necessary in order to effect a complete cure. Therefore, the Son of God, Who is Infinite Truth, the Eternal Supernal Reason, became incarnate in the womb of a Virgin, was made man like us, in order that His Humanity might become the mystic ladder by which we rise to the invisible Throne of Divinity. "Do not say that the spirit alone is sufficient," exclaims Bossuet. "The body is the means of union with the spirit, for the Son of God came down to us by being made Flesh; and it is through His Flesh that we must recover His Spirit and His Divinity."[16] We are made partakers of the Divine Nature, explains S. Peter in his epistle, because Jesus Christ has shared our nature. We must, then, be united to the Flesh which the Lord took, in order that through this Flesh we may enjoy the Divinity of this Word and become as God by taking His feelings and character.

5. But even this was not enough, the sojourn of the Son of God upon earth could only be temporary, and His Sacred Humanity dwells now far from us, in the height of glory; but love has resources, and a delicacy of invention that it alone can conceive. A word was spoken, "I will not leave you orphans," and behold by a miracle of the Almighty, the Body of the Saviour, which formerly presented the Truth to us under a form visible to the senses, is in our midst, has become the manna of the desert, the food both visible and invisible of spirits clothed in mortal flesh. The Word of God, Who is hidden in nature to teach us, Who is incarnate in words that He may reveal to us the highest Christian mysteries; the Word of God, impelled by love, still found all these wonders not enough and has given Himself to us under the form of food: He becomes, so to speak, our flesh and our substance, and whilst the sensible form, that we call species or appearance, is received by the material part of our being, a communion takes place in those higher regions which the

[16] Bossuet, *Médit. La Cène,* Pt. I., day 24, p. 319.

Apostle calls " the division of soul and spirit,"[17] a real communion, that is to say, a blending of the Divine Being Who gives Himself, and the human being who receives the Divine life. Then that which took place of old in the Earthly Paradise is partially renewed, when " the bread of man was the joy of Divine Vision, the communion with the Word of God, the love of God, the sweetness of contemplation, and the desire for familiar intercourse."[18]

A holy Doctor considers this sublime mystery under another point of view, which shows us the greatness of man, and the infinite condescension of God, Who knows how to adapt His grace, nay, even Himself to stoop to meet the exigencies of our constitution. Reasonable beings may be considered under a triple aspect, as immaterial, or as composed of contrary elements opposed to each other, or again, these elements may be considered as forming, in the same person, a fraternal unity. The Angels belong to the first degree, and the only food which is suitable to them is the immaterial Word, the Eternal Wisdom of the Father.[19] In man, we may consider the two elements which constitute him, namely, body and soul, either separately, or as united in one personality. In the first case, man needs a double food, as the spirit in him needs the invisible food which sustained the Angel Raphael, and the animal needs the fatness of the earth. But if we consider in man the wonderful fusion by which the Creator has united in one and the same person two contrary elements, and has combined them in a marvellous union of love, we need for the simultaneous life of our two natures only one food, which shall be at the same time both bodily and spiritual, and this single food is the Divine Eucharist, in which the Word of God nourishes the soul, and deposits in our bodies the germs of life and Resurrection.[20]

[17] Hebrews iv. 12 (Vulgate).
[18] S. Aug., *Hom. 57 on S. Matt. vi. 7.* Ox. Edit.
[19] Tobit xii. 19.
[20] S. Aug. *On Psalm cxxxv.,* Sec. 5, p. 130. Ox. Edit.

Undoubtedly, this Divine Food, now offered to us under the veil of the Sacrament, is only a transitory thing relating to our mortal existence. "One day," says S. Augustine, "these temporal Sacraments will no longer exist; they are the sick man's bandages, temporal remedies; in a state of perfect health they will be taken away; but they are actually necessary, and without them a complete cure cannot be attained."[21]

This Food of Angels (which we receive under the form of manna), will one day give place to the Eternal Truth, which, without veil or shadow, will fill us with light, life and love throughout eternity; then the words of S. Augustine will be verified. "That the true bread of the soul is the Word, the Truth, the Wisdom and the Power of God."[22] This doctrine has brought out two lines of thought, which are surprising when first presented, but when fully understood and meditated on in the silence of love are seen to leave absolutely intact the wonderful doctrine of the Eucharist, and yet open out infinite distances before the heart and mind.

6. This life, then, is the childhood of humanity, and its food must be suited to its condition and capacity.[23] For the Saints, the Eucharist is only as infants' milk when compared to the Communion with the Word in Eternity.[24] This milk is necessary, but it is only milk. The Eucharist is a preparation. It is thus that by a milk diet for some months, the child is accustomed to solid food, for the Word in His eternal form is solid food and Heaven the true Table of humanity, and the food which the immortal soul demands, is the Divine Nature itself. Listen to tradition: "The Word," says S. Irenæus, "came down to us, not indeed in His glory as He could have done, but in a form that we could bear to behold. He could have appeared in all His

[21] S. Aug., *On Ps.cxlvii.*, Sec. 8, p. 365. Ox. Edit.
[22] S. Aug., *On Ps. cxxxv.*, Sec. 12, p. 137. Ox. Edit.
[23] S. Aug., *Serm. XCV.*, Sec. 3. Ox. Edit.
[24] *Ibid., On Ps. xxxiv.*, Sec. 6, p. 346. *On S. John, Hom. 13*, p. 200.

glory, but we should have been crushed under the splendour of His Divine Majesty. And if the Word stooped to this provision of tenderness, it was not on His own account, for He could have given us at once perfect food, but it was because humanity was incapable of assimilating it."[25] "Heaven," says S. Bernard, "is a safe dwelling place where the Word is the sweet food of the soul. I indeed possess the Word here below, but in the flesh . . . . . I possess Him in reality, but in a Sacrament. It is absolutely impossible to find the same sweetness in the husk of the Sacrament as in the pure flour of wheat; in faith as in vision; in a mirror as in the face itself; in the form of a servant taken by Christ, as in His true splendour. You see, then," he continues, "that there is no less difference between earthly food and that which we shall enjoy in heaven, than between earth and heaven; the good which the Blessed possess is as superior to that of this exile, as Heaven is superior to earth."[26] Again, according to the teaching of the Fathers, Christians ought to make use of the Eucharist as a means of drawing near to the Word; they ought, according to S. Augustine,[27] to raise themselves by this food, apportioned to their human state, to that which the Angels feed upon; they must rise from the Eucharistic Flesh to the Word Who is Wisdom, to the Word Who is Justice, Who is Truth, Who is Holiness. . . .

If this view of the Holy Communion is taken, the result is that the soul is marvellously lifted up, and strengthened, to share the Divine glory; then, according to the words of a Father, it is the mind of the Word that breathes in us, and religion will no longer consist, as sometimes happens, in little details practised by very small minds, whilst under a superficial husk,

[25] S. Irenæus, *Against Heretics,* Book IV., Ch. XXXVIII., Sec. 1, V. 2, p. 42. Edin. Edit.
[26] S. Bernard, *Song of Songs,* Serm. 33, Sec. 3.
[27] S. Aug., *Sermon 59,* Sec. 6, p. 101. Ox. Edit.

things are often hidden which are far from being divine.

" Some day," says S. Augustine, " we shall no longer have the Sacrament of the Altar, we shall no longer hear Holy Scripture read. We shall see the Word, we shall hear the Word, we shall eat the Word, and drink the Word. Our life will be that of the Angels. We shall no longer lose ourselves in crooked phrases; we shall only drink the Word, and filled with His Substance, we shall sing the hymn of heaven."[28] " O my God," said an illustrious Cardinal, " the intellectual and moral part of my life needs to be re-made by Thee Who art the supreme Life; but what can renew the life of the reasonable being, except an immaterial food, that is to say, Thy incorruptible Wisdom, Thy Creative Word? "[29]

In this way the holy Doctors, whilst maintaining the orthodox truths of the Eucharist, understood it in the highest sense; they saw in It a means of arriving at Communion with the Eternal Word; in this world by real and Sacramental Communion, but above all in eternity, when all action, all words will be reduced to feeding on and drinking the Word, and to singing the heavenly song, during the ages of ages.[30]

7. The last proposition will help us to understand another truth, which is only a literal translation of the greatest teachers in the Catholic Church, namely, that the Eucharist is at once both *a figure and a truth.* It is a truth because It contains really and substantially the Body and Blood of our Divine Saviour: but it is a figure, because the full and complete reality, the nourishment which our hearts desire, the enjoyment of the Word in the plenitude of love, all this is only in its germ on earth. The unveiled truth contained in all these mysteries, the fulfilment of all our desires, is reserved for the days of eternity, when the food will

[28] S. Aug., *Serm. 57,* Sec. 7, p. 85. Ox. Edit.
[29] Le Cardinal Cusa, *Excit.,* Bk. VI., p. 533.
[30] S. Augustine, *Serm. 57 and 59, ibid.*

be the Word Himself in all the purity of His glorious radiance; when the beverage will be that new wine which Christ has said that He will drink with us in Heaven. For this wine will be the very substance of God, entering continually into us to transform us; the teaching will be the Word Himself contemplated face to face, the music again will be the Word Who contains in Himself all harmony and all the beauty of the melodies of Heaven. "The Sacrament of the Eucharist," says S. Thomas, "prefigures the possession of God, which we shall receive in Heaven."[31] "The Sacrament of the Altar," says Innocent III., "is at once a truth and a figure."[32] "It is a figure," says Hugh of S. Victor, "because it gives us a glimpse of the union of love which we shall have with Christ, and of that complete union by which we shall one day be absorbed into Him, by full resemblance, and in the same form of glory."[33]

"The Sacrament of the Eucharist," says Cardinal Cusa, "is a figure of the food of eternity which will one day nourish our souls; and in this sense we may say that the completeness of the truth will only be realised in Heaven; here below we indeed receive the Christ, but under sensible and figurative signs."[34] Do we not recite this beautiful and comforting truth in the Mass for the Feast of the Most Holy Sacrament? "Grant, O Lord, that we may be one day wholly penetrated with the eternal enjoyment of Thy Divinity, an enjoyment which is prefigured by the temporal reception of Thy Precious Body and Blood."[35] And elsewhere: "Grant, O God, that Thy Sacraments may so work in us that which they contain, that we may one

[31] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.,* Pt. I., Qu. 1, Art. 10, p. 17—*Ibid.* Pt. III., Qu. 73, Art. IV., p. 239.
[32] Innocent III., *De Sacr. alt. myst.,* Ch. XXXV., Vol. IV., p. 878. Edit. Migne.
[33] Hugh de S. Victor, *In Hier. cœl.,* Bk. II., t. 1, p. 952. Edit. Migne.
[34] Cardinal Cusa, *De pace fidei,* p. 877.
[35] S. Francis de Sales, *On the Love of God,* Bk. III., Ch. XII.

day obtain the reality of those things which are now wrought in us under the form of symbols."[36]

Let us notice that the doctrine of the Church is both narrow and wide, avoiding both extremes. The Capharnaites understood the Flesh of Christ to be eaten after a natural manner; Christ and the Church have opposed them. Protestants have invented some strange metaphorical Presence with no relation to reality. The Church defended the truth of the dogma, the truth of the Sacramental Presence, but, say the Doctors, it is a spiritual Presence compared to that of spirits. She has gone further, and has recognised, whilst ever admitting the reality of the Presence, that the Eucharist is also in a sense a figure, because everything that operates here below, even in Sacraments, *is* a shadow, or a figure of our glorious and eternal destiny.

There will be then one day a Eucharist more perfect than that of earth, the great Eucharist of the Word, in which the Divine nature itself will be given to us in the joy of a bridal banquet. But while awaiting this, let us cheerfully accept the conditions of our existence, such as God has arranged in His infinite mercy, according to the laws of progressive wisdom. Let us take the children's milk: later, when we have attained the maturity of age, we shall receive the pure essence of infinite truth. S. Augustine draws out a delightful comparison, containing the clearness of truth and the tenderness of love. "Look at a mother! she does not at once give her child solid food, but she herself takes the nourishment, introduces it into her body, and, as it were, incarnates the bread. . . . She changes it into a more tender and delicate nourishment, and when this work of maternal love is accomplished, the mother's milk flows with her love into the infant's mouth. In the same way, God, in consideration of our weakness, has not willed to give us His Word, as He is in the glory and splendour of the Saints, the Word, the

[36] Post Comm. prayer, Mass for Corpus Christi.

nourishment of Seraphims; the powerful rays of that burning Sun, and the active energy of that Wisdom which moves the worlds, would have stifled our life, instead of supporting it. Therefore, the loving Father fed us with His wisdom as milk. He Himself came in mortal Flesh, the Apostle said, 'Jesus Christ Himself and Him crucified,' suck thou that which He became for thee, and thou growest into that which He is,"[37] who has prepared for you the milk of life, and when grown your food will be the Word Who dwells in the bosom of the Father, unveiled in the light of eternity. S. Clement of Alexandria expresses very beautifully the same thought: "'I have fed you with milk in Christ,' says S. Paul . . . let us add as children . . . I have instructed you with simple, true and natural nourishment, namely, that which is spiritual, for such is the nourishing substance of milk swelling out from breasts of love. . . . As nurses nourish new-born children on milk, so do I also by the Word, the milk of Christ. . . . . Rightly, therefore, the Lord again promises milk to the righteous that the Word may be shown to be both the beginning and the end—Alpha and Omega. I will bring you to a land 'flowing with milk and honey.' 'I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ' . . . as those recently instructed 'for whereas there is among you envy and strife, are ye not carnal.' . . . . 'Wherefore also I have given you milk to drink' . . . meaning I have instilled into you the knowledge which nourishes up to life eternal. But the expression 'I have given you to drink' is the symbol of perfect appropriation. For those who are full grown are said to drink; babes only suck. 'For My Blood is true drink,' says the Lord . . . so 'I have given you milk to drink,' indicates the truth in the Word Who is the milk."[38]

[37] S. Aug., *On Ps. xxxiii.*, Sec. 6, p. 346. *Ps. xxxi.*, Sec. 9, p. 245. *Ps. cxx.*, Sec. 2, p. 461. Ox. Edit.

[38] Clem. of Alex., *The Instructor*, Book I., Ch. VI., p. 138, Edin. edit.

In this way we must understand the symbol of bread in the Sacrament of the Eucharist; bread means nourishment; the Word, the Truth, is the food of the soul; the Word cannot yet be given to us under His pure form and in His natural essence; therefore, God gives it to us (like milk) under the form of bread in the Eucharist, while awaiting the true eternal banquet of souls in the bosom of God. Such is the commentary of Catholic tradition on these words: "I am the Living Bread, the Bread come down from Heaven. My Flesh is meat indeed."[39] And of these also: "Lord, Thou feedest Thine own people with Angels' food, and didst send them bread from Heaven, containing in itself all sweetness."

II.

We said, at the beginning of this lecture, that in the Sacraments there is an appropriate connection between the outward sign and the grace of the Sacrament, the outward appearance showing, by comparison, the special nature of the heavenly benefits. In Baptism, water is the natural emblem of purification. It remains for us to develop this thought in the Eucharist.

1. Bread is the foundation of the human body; as S. Gregory of Nyssa says; it is at once the commonest and the most precious food that the generous and fruitful hand of nature has prepared for us; and it is the type and synonym of food in general. But what is the effect of bodily nourishment? To renew life and to give strength. Our body suffers a continual loss of vigour, material life is consumed and used up more quickly than the clothes which cover us. Health-giving and substantial food constantly makes good this natural weakness, and when a man partakes of a hearty meal, he feels life circulate in him like the sap in spring. It is the same in our soul; its moral force and its spiritual life become constantly exhausted in the

[39] S. John vi. 51, 55.

midst of the struggle of life; every human being has felt the icy coldness of moral lethargy, which threatens to penetrate into the life of the soul, and to stop the very beat of the heart. Day by day the forces of the soul, too, are used up. Its strength fails in the strife with evil, with temptation and with the deceptions of the world, or the shocks of hatred and calumny; and even when the soul has nothing outward to strive against, there are enemies within, the anguish and struggles of an important spirit which longs for wings to fly towards the object of its desires, and those petty annoyances like swarms of insects, which torment us in this life. But God in His mercy has given the soul solid and suitable food, as to an athlete, and when the heavenly feast is over, it rises and continues its road like a joyful pilgrim singing with the Psalmist: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. . . Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies . . . my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.[40] Calix meus inebrians quam praeclarus est!"[41]

2. When the prophet Elijah was persecuted by the heathen queen Jezebel, he fled to the desert, and after a day's journey, seated himself under a juniper tree, and said to God: "It is enough, now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." Then he lay down and slept a deep sleep. An angel came to him and said: "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for thee." Elijah arose, ate the bread provided by the Angel, and in the strength of that food he went "Forty days and nights unto Horeb, the mount of God."[42]

The prophet Elijah is the Christian soul journeying

[40] Ps. xxiii.
[41] (Vulg.).
[42] 1 Book of Kings, xix. 4, 7, 8.

in the desert of this life. Wearied with the weight of existence, often the poor exile is tempted to discouragement, and throws himself down under the shade of the first rock he meets with. He cries to God: "It is enough, take away my life, for my strength is dried up within me." Faithless soul, lift up your eyes, and see the Angel who is beside you; he brings heavenly food, taste this strengthening manna, you will then rise strengthened, for you have still a long way to go. "Take this Bread. It is Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ is the Life and our Life is this Bread," says Tertullian.[43] How many souls have failed in life, and have yielded to despair and its most horrible consequences, because they knew not the supernatural strength which the Christian draws daily from the Divine Eucharist! How many weak souls faint in moral languor, because having known the gift of God, they have neglected it, they have forgotten to eat their bread, as the Prophet says, and their soul has become enervated like the body of a man who has failed for some time to take food![44] "The soul falls down," says S. Cyprian, "when the Eucharist is not there to raise it up."[45] The African Christians, in the time of S. Augustine, never spoke of this Divine Sacrament except as "The Life."[46] "The Bread of Angels came down from Heaven to nourish hungry souls," says S. Cyril. The world is often surprised at the vigour of certain Christians[47] and the fortitude which they display under difficult circumstances; it seems to think that these souls do not feel, do not understand, that they have allowed their sensibilities to become atrophied, and that their nature has become hard and cold like granite. In this respect the world resembles a blind man who talks about colours; he refuses to believe in the mysteries of God,

[43] Tertullian, *On Prayer*, Ch. VI., p. 184. Edin. edit.
[44] Ps. cii. 4.
[45] S. Cyprian, *Epist. 30.* Not in Eng. edit.
[46] S. Aug., *De Merit. et Remiss.*, Ch. XXIV.
[47] S. Cyril, *Catech. Lect. XII.*, Sec. 1, p. 124. Ox. Edit.

which surpass his short-sightedness. Those souls who appear so strong and unshaken, have been and are perhaps still like Elijah, pilgrims walking through the desert. They have often had, and still have the temptation to stop at the beginning of the road, and say to God: "It is enough, Lord, enough of this long painful existence, with its struggle and sacrifice." But see, close beside them is an Angel who brings every morning heavenly bread. The exhausted soul receives the food, and then arises and goes forward defying the dangers and the fatigues of the way. Christians, you who have faith but are so weak in bearing the burdens of life, do not murmur against Providence, but blame rather your lukewarmness and your wanderings. You refuse the bread of Angels; though manna falls daily from Heaven, or you receive this celestial food unprepared, and the road of life only grows longer and harder to you.

Recognise your mistake, receive with love this Bread of Life to restore the strength of your exhausted soul, and you, too, will be able to rise up again full of vigour and health. You need it, for you have still a long way to go.

3. How can we explain these mysteries of transformation? There is nothing more difficult to understand from the natural point of view. Nothing is easier to the eye of faith. We have said that there is a profound difference in the effects of nutrition, according to the nature of beings; let us develop the consequences of this. When the creature which is taken as food is of a lower order, it becomes absorbed in our substance; if, on the contrary, it is of a superior order, we become, as it were, transubstantiated into its nature, and it is this marvel which is worked in the mystery of the Eucharist. When we communicate fervently, we do not change the Divine Food into ourselves, as happens with ordinary nourishment, but the Heavenly Food changes us into Itself; and communicates Its Life to us, like a graft, which infuses its strength and

more perfect nature into the original trunk. "Ordinarily," says Pope Innocent III., "what we eat is changed into the substance of the being who receives it; but here the food takes the active part, it incorporates, and he who eats, becomes incorporated."[48] "The reason that Christ willed to be eaten by us is, that He might incorporate us into Himself."[49] Tradition is rich in treasures concerning this grand truth.

"It is necessary that God should feed upon us," says S. Ambrose, "and that the food of our souls should be delicious to Him; happy are they whom Wisdom thus consumes, happy they whom Divine virtue absorbs into Itself."[50] "Let us be God's Food," says S. Paulinus, "may Christ feed upon us, and in feeding upon us, give us life."[51] Albert the Great gives two admirable reasons for these marvels. When two things are so united that one transforms the other, the stronger and better changes the weaker into itself. Therefore, the Eucharistic Food, having a Divine and more powerful force, changes into Itself those who receive it, according to that which was said to S. Augustine: "Thou wilt not change Me into thyself as thou dost the food for thy body, but it is thou who wilt be changed into Me!" And there is another reason for this mystery; if the Divine food were changed into *us*, it would be no use, for we are nothing except through God, and that is why He must change *us* into *Himself* that He may pour His grace upon us.[52] But no one has explained this truth with greater energy and depth than S. Bernard. "Christ feeds upon me, He digests me, He absorbs me into Himself by a Divine transformation. Do not wonder at this:

[48] Innocent III., *De Sacr. Alt. Myst.*, Bk. IV., Ch. XIV., p. 866. Edit. Migne.

[49] Hugh of S. Victor, *De Sacr.*, Bk. I., para. 8.

[50] S. Ambrose, *On the Mysteries*, Ch. IX., Sec. 57, p. 325. Select Library Edit.

[51] S. Paulinus, *Ep. 23, No. 16*, p. 268. Edit. Migne.

[52] Albert le Grand, 4 Sent. dist. 9, Art. 2, Vol. XVI., p. 121.

He feeds upon us, and we upon Him, in order that we may be more closely united to Him, otherwise our union would be imperfect. Our union will be perfect, if He feeds upon me, and I upon Him, because then I shall be in Him, and He in me.—When God and man then are linked together on each side, which is the case when they are incorporated by intimate and mutual love, then I do not hesitate to say that God is in man, and that man is in God."[53]

How happy and proud we should be to be Christians! to belong to this Divine religion, whose first and last word is love, the most astonishing and the most intimate, the greatest and most sovereign love; to this Divine religion, whose first and last word is the perfecting of our nature, making us as gods, by changing us into Christ!

4. One more thought! The Eucharist is a mystery whose horizons stretch out into infinity. This is nothing more than a development of the words: "She (Wisdom) will feed him with the bread of understanding,"[54] and of these, "I am the Truth."

The illustrious Haydn, one of the most celebrated of German composers, was once asked from what source he drew his inspirations. He replied: "In my house I have a little Chapel, and I go and pray there when I am tired; there I regain vigour of mind and freshness of composition."[55]

Have we ever noticed faces which seemed to sparkle with the impress of Christianity? There is a clearness, a calmness, a Divine something, which is not of the flesh, about them, but which is very beautiful. There are also writers who have a special character. Read certain passages of Bossuet, Fénelon, S. Francis de Sales, S. Thomas, S. Augustine, there is nothing on earth equal to them. A calm, serene divinity flows under the transparent words; it seems as if the soul

[53] S. Bernard, *Song of Songs,* Serm. 71, Sec. 5,—*Ibid.,* Sec. 10.
[54] Ecclus. xv. 3.
[55] Schubert, *Die Geschichte der Seele,* 31, p. 492.

had broken the chains of the body for a few moments, and no longer breathes the heavy atmosphere of time. It hears the sounds of eternity and reads the characters of the language which God must have spoken to man in the earthly Paradise; Who has given these men wings to fly where even the wings of genius have not penetrated? The answer is simple to him who knows the mysteries of the Eucharist; for in this great Sacrament genius is purified, raised, harmonised, and transfigured on the Tabor of thought.

S. Thomas Aquinas, the Angel of the Schools, received this Word of Light daily through the Sacrament of love; then he retired to his cell, and wrote quite naturally in a Divine language. This marvellous man, whose power of thought matched, in height and solidity, the ancient pyramids of Egypt, followed but one process in mind and heart: he studied as he prayed and prayed as he studied. The Eucharist formed the centre of his life, It was to him Christ the Word of God under a mortal form: that Word which is the source of all Divine and human knowledge; and so this messenger of light spread his great wings, and after traversing the luminous depths of the Divine Essence descended again to the dark regions of this world, to pour forth those torrents of pure light which are so rarely found in humanity. "He knew," said he, "but one Teacher, Christ," but Christ is the source of all wisdom and all truth; and the Eucharistic Tabernacle was for him the dwelling place of Christ on earth. There he went to pray, to be fed and refreshed, and yet, some moments before his death, he had an hour of ecstasy; and when he came to himself, he exclaimed: "I have just seen things so beautiful and ravishing, that all that I have hitherto felt and written here below, is as nothing in comparison."[56]

Happy is the soul, who can follow him even afar off. If God has gifted that soul with intelligence, the

[56] Card. Vaughan, *Life of S. Thom. Aq.* Abridged edition, Ch. XXII., p. 536.

Eucharist will add to that intelligence new and stronger wings, and its life will be an ever-increasing clearer dawn, the dawn of that infinite light which will one day flood the world in torrents, without cloud and without limit: then, indeed, the soul will have been nourished with the Bread of Life and knowledge.[57] Then life will be "as a flood filled with understanding"[58] and ever young and vigorous in our immortality, our whole occupation will be to be happy in loving, and to chant our joy and happiness in the language of the Seraphim. "Let us sing unto the Lord a new song: let the congregation of saints praise Him."[59]

[57] Bk. of Wisdom, Ch. XVI., vv. 20, 21—26.
[58] Ecclus. xlvii. 14.
[59] Ps. cxlix. 1.

LECTURE IV.

THE SYMBOL OF WINE.

Prov. ix. 5. Cant. v. 1.

"THE remedies of salvation," said the Angelical Doctor, "are offered to men under a sensible form; these instruments of spiritual life must, therefore, be classed according to analogy with our bodily life.—Now it is not enough to receive our existence by the way of generation, it is also necessary that this material existence communicated through the blood of our forefathers should be sustained and strengthened by a healthy and fortifying diet—so also in spiritual matters it is not enough that the life of grace is transmitted to us by Baptism, this life also needs to be fed and developed by a food in keeping with our immortal nature."[1] So by an unheard-of prodigy the Infinite God is always with us, even through His Humanity; He nourishes us with His flesh, as a mother gives milk to her child, and, while awaiting the glorious day when truth Itself shall be our light and food, holy souls gather up the heavenly manna, and with it strength, to sustain their moral life in the desert way.

We have developed in order the truths concerning the symbol of bread in the Eucharist. "I am the bread which came down from Heaven, My Flesh is meat indeed," said the Divine Saviour. But that is not all; the Saviour said: "My Blood is drink indeed." We must now consider the symbol of wine, under which the Saviour has hidden His real but Sacramental Presence.

I.

"Jesus Christ," said Bossuet, "made use of bread and wine to give us His Body and Blood, that the

[1] See S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, 3rd Pt., Qu. 73, Art. 1.

Eucharist might have the character both of strength and support, and also of joy and delight; and He willed also to teach us, by the figure of our ordinary food, that we must daily, not only sustain, but also warm our hearts; not only be strengthened, but also refreshed by Him, and drink long draughts of that love which will make us blessed through eternity."[2]

"Since reasoning man, on account of his double nature, has to receive his intellectual education by the channel of the senses, it is suitable that God should also send him sanctification by the symbol of sensible things."[3] "The Eucharist," says the Council of Florence, "produces in the spiritual order all the effects of material food and drink, that is to say, it sustains, causes growth, repairs strength, and fills the soul with holy joy."[4]

The Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "In order to help the faithful fully to understand the graces contained in the Eucharist, it is necessary to explain the meaning of the symbols of bread and wine employed for this Sacrament, for all the effects which bread and wine produce in the body, are operated by the Sacrament of the Eucharist for the salvation and joy of the soul, only in a better and more perfect manner."[5]

You see that religion in those mysteries of its worship, which appear to be most simple and common, touches that which is highest in philosophy, and gives glimpses of sublime truths just where the eye of the world throws but a passing glance. Everything is correlated here below the smallest grain of matter and the loftiest truth, as a celebrated orator has said: "To every vision of the uncreated world some created sight

[2] Bossuet, *Méd. sur l'Evang. La Céne,* p. 419—20.
[3] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.,* Pt. III., "On the Sacraments," Qu. 60, Art. 4, p. 7.
[4] Labbe, *De Conc.,* t. XIII., p. 537.
[5] See *Sum. Theo.,* Pt. III., Qu. 79, Art. 1.

corresponds, each voice from the one responds to a voice from the other."[6]

It is from this point of view that we must understand religion, which is simple because it is sublime, and which is both simple and sublime because it is true. The child at school learns to read the letters of the alphabet; and the man of genius, using the same simple forms, writes out his magnificent thoughts: with bread and wine man is nourished; and with bread and wine Christ has consummated the great wonder of His Life.

Have we not noticed that no occasion great, joyful, friendly or patriotic is celebrated without a banquet? The feast is almost the crown of everything, and many difficulties which had resisted all attempts at arrangement, have been smoothed out, and have disappeared as by enchantment in a cheerful gathering of happy guests. Men have abused, and still abuse this custom daily, but the abuse will not prevent us from noticing the ideal side which rises above human failings. Yes, the banquet is the seasoning of all things; it seems as if no business were finished, no joy complete, and no festival had full savour, unless men ate and drank together. There is a grand, a divine thought in this, it is the idea of communicating the life we all share, a natural communion, the enjoyment of the same refreshing drink; it is an act of brotherly companionship, and when we rise from table, friendship seems truer, and the bonds of affection more tightly drawn. So, too, the Psalmist considered the blackest treachery to be that of a man who betrays his friend after eating at his table, a villainy meriting special punishment. "It was even thou my companion, my own familiar friend . . . ."[7]

Listen to Bossuet: "The first thought we have in considering the mystery of the Eucharist is that it is a mark of social life for men to eat and drink together.

[6] Père Lacordaire, *49th Conf.*, "On God," No. 5, p. 24. (Man as an intelligent being.)

[7] Ps. xli. 9; Ps. lv. 13, 15.

Friendship is sustained by it, and men share their possessions, and their pleasures with their friends, they seem to declare that life is not life without their society . . ." Wisdom herself offers us no greater attraction than a banquet. . . Heavenly beatitude is represented as a feast.[8] Therefore the Saviour willed that the Last Supper should be a true feast, to bind His disciples together, and to prefigure the joy of that eternal banquet where they should be " satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures."[9] " That is why He celebrated His divine feast at night, at the end of day to remind us of the Divine eternal Supper, which He will give us at the end of time, when all things are consummated."[10]

While awaiting the day of glory and bliss, we must be content with the manna of the desert; we can submit, for this chalice is indeed inebriating; nevertheless, O Lord, Thou dost not forbid the exile while he receives the crumbs, to long and sigh for the desired moment when he may satisfy the great and unceasing need of his heart.

II.

A repast is incomplete without some beverage, and the best, and most strengthening, is wine. " Jesus Christ," says Innocent III., and also Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, " chose wine in order to institute the Divine Eucharist, because it is the most suitable element to express the effect of this great Sacrament. Wine warms, quickens and inebriates. And such are the effects produced in us by this Sacrament; it increases the soul's fervour, it fills us with spiritual joy, and at times intoxicates the soul with love."[11]

There are profound mysteries in the relationships

[8] Bk. of Proverbs, ix. 1—5.
[9] Psalm xxxvi. v. 8.
[10] Bossuet, *Med. La Cène.*, 1st Pt., day 52, p. 41.
[11] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, 3rd Pt., Qu. 74, Art. 5.—*Ibid., On Sac. of Altar,* Ch. XXX., p. 188. Eng. Trans. by Neale.

between the soul, the blood and the wine. "Wine is the earth's blood," said the ancients. "O King," said a celebrated doctor to Alexander the Great, "remember that when you drink wine, you drink the earth's blood."[12] The Egyptians called wine "The giant's blood." On the other hand, the soul and blood are closely related; blood seems to embody life; the strength and energy of health in human nature depends in a great measure on the condition of the blood, it appears to rule human vitality, and the nature of this liquid indicates the quality of the life. "The blood is the life."[13]

"The seat of the soul is in the blood, and thus the Blood of Christ became the price of our redemption."[14] Let us dwell then on the meanings of this symbol.

1. "The Eucharist," says S. Thomas Aquinas, "quickens the soul with a divine heat."[15] What is fervour? It is that disposition of soul which makes the most difficult commands of God easy to the will; it is a force which raises us, and our burdens, above ourselves; it is a Divine Breath which makes us not only walk, but run in the way of God's commandments, as the Prophet says: "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."[16] The fervent soul is like a fire, which rises through the materials, under which it seemed buried, and ascends rapidly; like a flame borne up by the breeze, or a bird which never sings so joyfully as when it breathes in the open air of heaven. Fervour, according to the teaching of S. Francis de Sales, is a spiritual agility and vivacity which leads us to obey God promptly, with love and sweetness.[17] "Love flies and rejoices, it

[12] Quoted by Pliny, *Hist. Nat.,* Bk. XIV., Ch. VII.

[13] Albert Magnus, *De Euchar.,* dist. 3, trac. 2, Ch. V., p. 62—63. Deut. xii. 23.

[14] *Ibid.,* dist. 1, t. XXI., Ch. V., p. 12.

[15] S. Thom. Aq., *On the Sacr. of the Altar,* Ch. XXIX., p. 181. Eng. Trans. by Neale.

[16] Ps. cxix. 32.

[17] S. Francis de Sales, *The Devout Life,* Part I., Ch. I.

is free, and fears no labour," says the author of the *Imitation.*[18] Nevertheless, it is true that many precepts are difficult to carry out, and virtue presupposes conflict; that man has within him an impulse contrary to the law of God, and that the way of salvation is steep edged with precipices, and often a rugged path. All that is undeniable, and, nevertheless, the ways of Wisdom "are pleasantness," says Holy Scripture, "and all her paths are peace."[19] And Christ Himself has said, "Take My yoke upon you . . . for it is easy and My burden is light, . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." How can we reconcile these apparent contradictions? Let us draw a comparison to explain this truth. If we glance at the map of the world, what a distance separates one town from another, mountains, valleys, rivers seem to be insurmountable barriers. Man, left to his own strength, would need many weeks, painful journeys and constant fatigue to overcome these distances, and would arrive exhausted at the end of his journey. And now, with just a little water changed into steam, and the aid of men's hands, it is possible to bring distant nations close together; we are able to pierce mountains, to cut granite like earth, and to level valleys; now man enters a furnished apartment, with all the comforts of life and is transported in the twinkling of an eye; distance is overcome, and he arrives at his destination, with so much ease and speed, that he can scarcely believe he has reached his journey's end. So has man's genius contrived and acted. Turn your thoughts now to the world of souls. Here are deeper valleys and higher mountains than those on earth; the distance between our corrupt nature and evangelical perfection is immeasurable. We exclaim: "How can a man be transplanted like a bird over such mountains of pride and valleys of vice?" It would seem a miracle that he should surmount the steep places even with difficulty and effort; almost a

[18] *Imitation of Christ,* Bk. III., Ch. V.
[19] Prov. iii. 17.

miracle that he should ever escape the precipices of life's temptations. But that he should pass along joyfully, as if the road were made of roses, this is a mystery which the mind refuses to believe, a miracle more astonishing than the overthrow of nature's laws. It is a miracle in the moral order, a miracle surpassing human understanding. Nevertheless, this miracle has been believed and practised by millions of Saints, it is still believed and practised daily by myriads of holy souls whom God hides in the shadow of His Tabernacles. And here is the secret: here in the cellars of the Catholic Church, there is a generous wine, which, like a Divine stimulant, infuses itself into the soul, warming and dilating it; so then the soul, being thus penetrated, nothing in nature, nor anything which man's genius has made, nor the bird who cleaves the air, can equal the promptitude, the energy and the ease of its movement. The Lord, says the Prophet, "did fly upon the wings of the wind."[20] Let us say also that the Lord gives wings to the righteous soul, and that it goes on from virtue to virtue, with such a rapid flight that the eye cannot follow it.

"The pilgrim," says S. Francis de Sales, "who takes a little wine to gladden his heart and refresh his mouth, does not break his journey, but he imbibes strength in order to finish it more quickly and easily."[21] "O lukewarm and weary Christians, who drag yourselves along the road, stumbling at every stone, you do not take the pilgrim's wise precaution, the desert road exhausts you, and you look backwards, regretting the food of Egypt. It is not surprising; the way is long and difficult, the sun is burning hot, and you continually lose strength, yet you do not take the generous wine which flows daily from the Churches' altars, or even if you do sometimes take it, your blood is so impoverished by a mixture of foreign substances, that life's

[20] Ps. xviii. 10.

[21] S. Fr. de Sales, *The Devout Life*, Pt. II., Ch. XIII., p. 91. Lib. of Spir. Works for Eng. Cath.

action is paralysed at its source. You are weak, and you do not drink that which not only gives strength, but a holy courage."[22]

2. The wine of the Eucharist produces a second effect, it fills the soul with joy. It is written that "wine maketh glad the heart of man."[23] This truth exists in the natural order in spite of the abuses made by human perversity, and it is one of the reasons why Jesus Christ took the fruit of the vine to institute the Sacrament of His Love. "For wine," says S. Thomas Aquinas, "is marvellously suitable to express the effect of the Eucharist, which is spiritual joy."[24] Elsewhere the Angel of the Schools teaches that in the Eucharist we taste spiritual sweetness at its source.

To have joy and peace in the soul, is happiness upon earth, as far as that heavenly fruit can be gathered in the valleys of this world; so much so, that men can be unhappy in the midst of every outward pleasure, and can have happiness in spite of poverty and neglect. We read in the lives of S. Antony, S. Dominic and S. Francis de Sales, that strangers were able to recognise them by an infallible mark; their faces were always beaming and happy, as we like to picture those of the Angels. They were true instances of those Saintly faces which we may venture to call Eucharistic physiognomies. This again is an astonishing mystery to the world; which cannot understand how the soul, tossed about like a leaf on the winds of human passions, can be tranquil, and enjoy heavenly peace; the world calls it illusion or else insensibility.

But what is the chief cause of the soul's joy, of that heavenly calm which marks the truly Christian face? We may reply by another question. What makes the infant so peacefully happy in the arms of its mother? The question answers itself. How can the soul which

[22] Albert the Great, *De Euchar.* S.Thom. Aq., *On the Sac. of the Altar,* Ch. XXIII., p. 143—4.
[23] Ps. civ. 15. Prov. xxxi. 6.
[24] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.,* Part III., Qu. 74, Art. 5.

has just received its God, Who is better than a father, tenderer than a mother, more familiar than the most intimate friend, how can this soul not be happy and filled with holy joy? How could its face not reflect at least some rays of the pure beatitudes which the Angels enjoy in heaven? How could such a soul be unhappy, with that deep sadness which affects life?[25] The soul has God, and when God possesses us, and has become as it were, one with us, what more can we need? All the goods of this world, its honours and pleasures, are little indeed when we possess God. The soul will always have sufficient to do God's Will and accomplish His purpose, and what matters being deprived of all else to one who is in communion with infinite Truth, Beauty and Glory? Naturally the soul has times of trial, but these are so softened by continual contact with God, that they seem to disappear as they take shape. The pilgrim is parched with thirst, after some hours' march under a burning sun, but when he has reached a clear spring, and bathed in it, he at once recovers. This world may be a desert in which we suffer from hunger and thirst, but Providence brings us to fresh shady oases, in retreats unknown to the world, where there is a spring of life and a heavenly vine. There the poor traveller stops, refreshes and strengthens himself; a liberal hand fills the cup, he drinks and continues his journey, happy and peaceful, as if the desert had been changed into a fertile plain.[26]

One of the most Eucharistic souls who ever existed, S. Catherine of Sienna, said: "By the virtue of this Sacrament, my heart is so enflamed that material fire seems to me cold in comparison; I am so full of joy that I cannot contain myself, and I am surprised that my whole being is not dissolved."[27]

[25] S. Clem. of Alex., *The Instructor,* Bk. II., Ch. II., p. 208, see p. 203.

[26] S. Thom. Aq., *On Sac. of the Altar,* Ch. XXX., p. 188—190. Neale's trans.

[27] Quoted by Corn. à Lapide, *Comm. on Zach.,* Ch. IX., v. 17, p. 739.

Certainly these are excesses of Divine mercy and tenderness, to which everyone cannot aspire, but is it not true that one occasion when we have been like a child of the family at the Angels' feast brings us more true joy and happiness, than all those vain shadows which the world calls pleasures? It was as a revelation of that invisible food on which the Saints live in Heaven, and which restores to them a Divine youthfulness.

3. Wine has a third property; when a certain quantity is taken, it intoxicates. S. Augustine, before treating this subject, said: "I fear that a sensual mind may attach a sensual meaning to my words, but this will not prevent me from explaining the mysteries of God."[28] There is a spiritual intoxication, in which the senses are as it were absorbed by love, and the soul seems asleep, but in a sleep which is the highest pitch of blessedness; in which all the powers may seem torpid, because they are wrapped in a deep repose. Then, says a holy divine, the soul is carried out of herself, and is wholly in God; for such is the effect of love; and if human passions can give rise to such experiences what may we not expect from the strongest, sweetest and most victorious love? Every act of Divine Love may produce these effects, but it is the wine of the Holy Eucharist especially which does so, it has produced in some Saints such a state of sublime languor, that life itself seemed suspended, and the soul lost in raptures of love which seem like folly; for love, when it reaches a certain height, is beside itself, and becomes like madness.[28] The faithful soul tells us in the Canticles: The King "hath brought me into the banqueting house (house of wine, in margin) . . ." And further she cries: "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love."[29]

If after a fervent communion, you should ever feel

[28] S. Aug., *Serm. 23,* No. 12. Lacordaire, *2nd Conf. at Toulouse, On the Life of the Passions,* p. 10—11.
[29] Cant. ii. 4, ii. 5.

this intoxication of soul, do not resist the Divine attraction; if you feel your heart resting on that of Jesus, let it follow that sweet inclination. Let perfect silence reign inwardly and outwardly; do not seek words, they will only interrupt the union; repose in simple confidence, and when the transport has passed, you will know what the love of God can be. The Holy Spirit says: "Come . . . drink of the wine which I have mingled."[30] You need not fear the consequences of the transport which the Cup of the Lord produces: "For," says S. Cyprian, "it does not act like the intoxication of material wine, it makes the soul temperate and reveals true wisdom."[31] "It is a folly which is sense, and an intoxication which is sobriety," says S. Augustine.[32]

In the world it is commonly thought that a man who communicates frequently must either have a brain slightly affected, or be at least an eccentric character. We will not deny the abuses which have given rise to such convictions. Religion is bound to tolerate much human folly. But frequent communion is perfectly compatible with wise, tactful conduct and a high order of intellect. Not only so, but of itself it tends, as far as human nature can co-operate, to promote these higher qualities. Unfortunately, the practical test is not easy, but it is the greatest injustice to make religion responsible for the weaknesses and follies which it is the first to deplore. "We have a delicious chalice to inebriate us," says S. Chrysostom, "but this chalice produces wisdom and not weakening of the brain." It does not disturb the mind, it is a treasure of wise thoughts.[33] "The Word," says S. Ambrose, "has

[30] Prov. ix. 5. Cant. v. 1.

[31] S. Cyprian, *Epist 63,* Sec. 8, p. 188. Ox. Edit.

[32] S. Aug., *On Ps. xxxiv.,* Ser. I., Sec. 8, p. 349, Ox. Edit. *Ibid.,* Ser. II., Sec. 12, p. 363, Ox. Edit.

[33] S. Chrys., *De Resurr.,* No. 2, t. II., p. 521. Edit. Gaume. See also S. Chrys., *On Epis. to Ephes.,* Hom. XIX., p. 301. Ox. Edit.

shed His Blood into the Divine Cup; in order to give life to those parts of our soul which have lost wisdom, and to restore their reason." And His aim is to transform our being, as it were, into wisdom.[34] Such ought to be the result of each communion, nor can human reason lose thereby. A man who communicates often, ought, though we must reckon for difference in temperaments, to be better, kinder, more gracious, more intelligent, more faithful to duty than those who do not communicate.[35]

4. Finally, the Eucharist infuses into the soul the germs of purity, and, as the Prophet says, is: "The wine which makes Virgins to grow."[36] Purity is a virtue in which a certain section of the world does not believe; for the same reason that the blind man does not believe in colour. This kind of reasoning will not bear discussion, because it is useless to prove the existence of light to him who has never seen it, and who does not believe those who assert its existence by experimental certainty. There are in the Catholic Church millions of souls who believe in purity, because they feel it in themselves, and come in contact every day with its fragrance in their fellow pilgrims. It is true, and here the world is right, that purity is a supernatural virtue, for, especially in certain natures, the flesh is like a leaden weight, which presses down the body, and it needs nothing less than Divine force to help them to raise it. It is true, too, that purity is often made impossible in the world, because in the present age, not only is there no divine counterpoise to the flesh, but, its weight is daily increased by the follies and often the orgies of vice. From this point of view then, purity is impossible, just as it is impossible that gunpowder

[34] S. Ambrose, *Epis. 65,* No. 5—6, t. III., p. 1223.
[35] S. Aug., *On Psalm xxxvi.,* Sec. 14, p. 416, 17. Ox. Edit.
[36] Zech. ix. 17 (Vulgate). "How good he is and how beautiful, the corn of the elect, the wine that makes virgins to flourish." (Translated.) See Comm. Corn. à Lapide on Zech. ix., giving varied readings of the Hebrew and showing the Eucharistic allusion to be evident.

should not burst when set on fire. But the Christian does not understand virtue in this way; not only does he lighten the burden of the flesh by his pure and holy life, but he possesses a force which raises him above the earth; and when the weight of nature tends to drag him down, the powerful reaction of a Divine influence holds him in.

In the heat of summer, plants dry up, and the most beautiful flowers wither, lacking sap, life and fragrance. But at night a sweet dew falls which refreshes them, and restores their freshness and beauty. There are also burning seasons for souls, and when the heat of passion has been kindled in the heart, there follows a deterioration of physical, and moral being, suspending the noble and divine life which is proper to our nature. "What will calm the impulses of a disordered life," says S. Bernard, "What will stay the violence of this inward fire?" The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. It is the Divine stream, issuing from Calvary, and spreading like a river over the earth. Those who drink of it, no longer thirst for the grosser pleasures of earth, they only feel the joys of pure souls. The blood is purified, carnal impulses are checked, and it seems sometimes as if the harmony which existed in Eden between the soul and the body were re-established, when the holy soul makes the body an instrument of its own will.[37]

This direct action of the Eucharist on the body is supported by the greatest authorities, and the testimony of a great number of the Fathers; and is, besides, thoroughly in agreement with the purpose of the Son of God in taking to Himself a body; which purpose was to act upon the material as well as upon the immortal and invisible part of our being. Nevertheless, we must agree with the Saints, that the Eucharist never entirely extinguishes the fire of evil desires; it may suspend the effects for more or less time, but unless a

[37] S. Thom. Aq., quoted in *Sac. of the Altar,* Chap. XXX. (the whole).

special gift of Providence is bestowed, the source of the evil remains within us, and we must not be astonished if volcanic shocks are still felt, even after the most fervent Communions. If S. Paul himself was not safe from these disturbances, who shall dare to expect entire deliverance from thraldom here below?[38]

But even without admitting this direct action of the Eucharist on the body, it is certain that its action is felt most strongly in the soul, and so reacts upon the body also. The pure soul, or one truly disposed to penitence, is flooded with graces and consolations, when she receives the Great Sacrament of the Altar; she is enlightened and her strength grows like a giant's, or, to use S. Chrysostom's phrase, "Becomes terrible as a lion." Courage, the desire of victory and the sense of security which love gives, are all stirred up by the presence of God. "Then," says S. Cyril, "the carnal law of the members is suspended, devotion is strengthened, and the sick members are healed."[39]

We read in the life of S. Bernard, that a young man came under his direction, who was given over to sinful excesses, and that the Saint endeavoured to reform him by all the means that zeal and charity could suggest, but without success. This unhappy young man seemed to be like a beast of burden, dragging by chains the car of iniquity, as Isaiah says: "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity."[40]

One day his bold director said to him: "To-morrow you must come to me, I will give you absolution, and you will communicate," and tremblingly the youth promised to do so. After his first absolution the Saint added: "To-morrow you will come to me again, and you will communicate." For a week or a fortnight the same command was given, and faithfully obeyed, and the young man became as pure as an Angel. No doubt such treatment was exceptional, and could not be

[38] Romans vii. 18, 24.
[39] S. Cyril of Alex., *In John*, Bk. IV., Ch. II., t. VI., p. 586.
[40] Isaiah v. 18.

attempted with everyone. But is it not going to the other extreme, to approach the Holy Table rarely, and rather in obedience to custom, than from feelings of devotion or desire? Here is a young man, given over to evil habits, who might become angelic if he were to communicate every fortnight or even every week. But you say "it's not the custom!" And what does custom matter? Is custom to proscribe the benefit of souls and their urgent need of salvation? In the name of the Lord, we declare that the remedy for an evil, which is, humanly speaking, incurable, is the Table of the Lord. When your soul is saturated with God, as Tertullian says, it will become dead to the taste of sensual pleasure. Here is the remedy; it is for us to use it, to claim it, to become worthy of it, for the Confessor can only give advice according to the disposition and wishes of his penitent. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into a fiery furnace by order of an impious king; but these glorious children of Providence walked in the midst of the flames, chanting hymns and blessing the Lord. An angel had come down from heaven, driven back the flames, and formed in the midst of the fire, a "moist whistling wind," the fire did not touch them, but rolling back with respect did them no harm: the happy children continued to sing and bless the Lord. This fiery furnace is a type of life; flames that will devour us seem at times to arise everywhere. Christians, be strong and go forward, receive the heavenly manna which falls near you; like Daniel, sing songs to the Lord, and say: "Our God is able to deliver us from the burning." If sometimes you feel the approach of this flame, take the Divine dew, it will produce a breath of fresh air, and the flame will disappear before it has touched you. If your heart is failing, receive this precious wine, for it strengthens, and leaves the heart full of good hope. It will check the violence of passion, and will replace the fire of sensuality by a purer and sweeter flame of pure love.

III.

1. In conclusion, let us glance a few moments at the life of the Catholic Church. We see a great association numbering many millions, which for more than eighteen centuries has held an important place in history. Its effect upon the world has been incalculable. We see its Bishops and Priests, who live in self-denial and sacrifice, renouncing family joys, and devoting themselves with zeal to many good works. The Church sends its missionaries to the four quarters of the earth; she hardly seems to count the life of her sons. At a word from her they go into exile, they give up the two sweetest things in the world, country and family. They adopt as brethren men whom they do not know, and towards whom they are not naturally drawn; on the contrary, customs, climate, barbarity, and often threatening terrors, might well repel them. Everywhere thousands of Sisters of Charity are consecrated to lowly and painful labour, to a life of hardship and privation, to the care of the sick, or the instruction of poor children in workhouses. Besides these there are wonderful women, such as Christianity can alone produce; mothers of families, who in their households are examples of sublime virtue; leading lives of self-sacrifice hardly noticed by their husbands and children. Besides all this there are young people strong in virtue and purity, at the age when passion is strong, and threatens to overpower others; strong men of mature age, full of noble devotion, and venerable old men, whose lives have been beautiful and honourable, and who have passed through the world, many without mortal sin. In spite of faults, in spite of many irregularities inherent in human nature, in spite even of crimes, when we contemplate the great array of the Church Catholic, we can say with the Prophet: "How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, and thy tabernacles O Israel. . . . As gardens by the riverside, as trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, as cedar trees beside the waters."[41]

[41] Num. xxiv. 5, 6.

What, then, is it, that maintains this wonderful life, that explains how the life of solitaries can be a life full of joy and happiness; that explains the life of Bishops and Priests, of Sisters of Charity, of missionaries who adopt as their own the most savage countries of the world; and that makes the Christian life in the midst of the world often so heroic and courageous? One word only explains these wonders: it is the Eucharist! The Eucharist is indeed the bread and wine of the Church, the root of its strength and the continual renewal of its existence.[42] Without the Eucharist, there would be a famine in the Church, for the Christian life would be a desert. What deceives the world and astonishes it so much when it hears this said, is that the Eucharist is an invisible force. But consider, does not everything in this world move by an invisible force? Is not that vital energy which in springtime brings forth vegetation, and covers the earth with a magnificent carpet of green, an invisible force? Is not the sap itself concealed in the bark of the tree? Is not electricity, which so stirs the world to-day, and sends our thoughts to the four quarters of the globe, at once, is not electricity both a visible and an invisible force? Is not the law of gravitation which governs the wonderful order and precise movements of the heavenly bodies, an invisible power?

Well, the Eucharist is all this in the Catholic Church; it is the inward energy of a divine vegetation, it is the sap which maintains life in the garden of souls; it is the electricity which circulates everywhere, and a centre of powerful attraction. It is the Sacrament of the invisible; the centre of good works, yet no one sees the hidden God; it moves the religious world, and people ask, whence comes this magic power? The beauty, the order, the splendour of our Churches are all due to the Eucharist. Take away the Sacrament of love, and

[42] Bossuet, *Medit. sur l'Evangile, La Cène,* Pt. I., 58 jour, p. 433. "A little wine, a morsel of bread . . . . there are the true riches of the Church."

everything is cold in the temple, both the walls and my heart. What would be the use of the Altar, of all these ceremonies, these offerings? This tender popular worship? Doubtless God is everywhere in His Divine Nature, and consequently He is in a church without the Eucharist, but there would be no longer that presence of love, that presence of brother and friend, without which a thousand details of our worship would have no meaning. It would be no longer the Incarnate Word Who looks at us, saying these sweet words: "Come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." The great eternal God would be there, but no longer He Who became a little child for me, and has made Himself my food and my drink: no longer the necessary bread and wine of our life. But if my God is there present in the vesture of His love, if the Word made man dwells with us under the same roof, we can understand the magnificence and splendour of worship; there must be something to indicate His Presence, there must be an Altar, a tabernacle, acolytes, for Christ loves children; there must be chanting, full congregations; we must have a court for our dearly-loved Prince. There must be adoration, not for Him, He can do without, but for us, poor human beings, who need to be led by our senses to the invisible God. "The Eucharist," says S. Chrysostom, "is the fountain of the terrestrial paradise, it is the source of the rivers of grace and blessing which fertilise the Church. On the banks of these rivers a magnificent vegetation is developed; there grow those trees whose tops reach to heaven, and which produce in their season such incorruptible fruits."[43] "The Eucharist," says Albert the Great, "is the golden chain which draws humanity back to its centre, and which allows it to be almost identified with the Divine Nature, by that kind of transubstantiation

[43] S. Chrys., *On S. John's Gos., Hom. 46,* Div. 4, p. 400, 401. Ox. Edit.

which the heavenly food works in us."[44] "For," says a learned Cardinal, "this is the object, the final end of this Sacrament, to change us into Christ; and, like as the bread is changed into the substance of the Body of Jesus Christ, and nothing remains but the accidents or appearances, so human nature should daily by the virtue of the Sacrament be changed into Christ,[45] so that nothing remains of our human nature but the outward appearances, and the reality should be Christ Himself."[46]

Let us remember, that according to S. Augustine's beautiful words we do not only belong to Christ, but we ought to be Christ Himself,[47] and it is the Eucharist alone which gives me the complete explanation of this mystery.[48] It works upon me daily, it carries out the deification of my body and my soul; for, as the Church declares, we ought to become participators in the Divinity of Christ, as He Himself became participator in our humanity.

O God, how dost Thou raise and ennoble all things! and how the Divine current of Thine all-powerful goodness everywhere quickens and even glorifies material atoms! What glory dost Thou shed over all nature! Henceforward, when we walk in the country, we will not only say to ourselves: Souls are the fields of God, and already white unto harvest, but to borrow the thoughts of a holy doctor: "Oh, the great goodness of God, in that He has prepared in the cornfields a Eucharistic mystery in the natural order, by commanding the earth to produce that which is used to

[44] Albert the Great, *De Euchar.*

[45] It was said of Father Coudren: "He was like the Host on our Altars: outwardly we see the accidents and appearance of bread, but inwardly it is Jesus Christ, so was it with this great servant of our Lord." *The Oratory of France,* by R. P. Perraud, p. 207.

[46] Card. Cusa, *Excit.,* Bk. III., p. 409.

[47] S. Aug., *On S. John,* Trac. XXI., Sec. 8, 9, p. 34, 35. Edin. Edit.

[48] Ephesians i. 23; iv. 16; v. 32.

conceal and yet convey the substance of the Body of God, and that He has sown the seeds of life and joy in the fruit of the vine which gladdens and strengthens the heart of man."[49] Glory be to Thee, O God! but do Thou finish Thy work, make us also Thy wheat and Thy vine. "I am the wheat of God," said S. Ignatius.[50] "Our vines flourish."[51] Let nothing remain in man but the appearance, the sensible accidents, but let the true life, the inward life be that of Christ. Then will the words of S. Paul be fully realised. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ Who liveth in me."[52]

Thanks be to Thee, O God, that Thou dost teach us such great things by that which is most ordinary in our lives. Ah, when shall we be seated at the Heavenly Father's table? When, O God, shall we have a place at the heavenly feast, where Thou, our Saviour and our Master will be our food, where we shall drink together of the new Wine, of which Thou didst speak to Thine Apostles:[53] that Wine which will transport us with heavenly joy; that new Wine, O Divine Word, will be the sight of Thine Infinite Beauty, and of Thine immortal splendours.

[49] Albert the Great, *De Euchar.*, Dist. 3, tr. II., Ch. I. S. Clem. of Alex., *The Pedagogue*, Bk. II., Ch. II., p. 200. Edin. Edit.

[50] S. Ignatius, *Letter to Romans*, Par. iv., p. 90. Edit. Rivington.

[51] Cant. ii. 13.

[52] Gal. ii. 20.

[53] S. Matthew xxvi. 29.

LECTURE V.

THE EUCHARIST IS THE MASTERPIECE OF DIVINE LOVE.

"Greater love hath no man."

THE Eucharist is a masterpiece of power on God's part: we have seen this while proving the truth of the Real Presence. Nothing less than God's power could establish this daily miracle; and yet this miracle is a trifle for the power of the Eternal, to Whom to think is to will, and to will is to do. Of old the Almighty spake the word: "Be fruitful and multiply."[1] This single utterance gave birth to all births. "So, too," says S. Chrysostom, "these words, 'this is My Body, do this in remembrance of Me,' created in the Church the miracle which will continue unto the end of time."[2] But as with God, His power is the prime minister of His goodness, His fatherly foresight and His tenderest love, so the Eucharist has been given to man as a pledge of Infinite Mercy; It is his food and drink during his earthly exile, and prepares him to receive one day in purity the food of immortality. . . .

We have still to show that the Eucharist is the masterpiece of Divine Love.

I.

1. Love and goodness are the spring of God's works. God in His eternal One-ness enjoys a perpetual festival; happiness is ever present to Him, ancient yet ever new. He is one, because there is only one God and Lord; yet He enjoys in Himself all the delights of companionship, because His Power, Wis-

[1] Genesis i. 28.

[2] S. Chrys., *Hom. 1, in Prodit. Juda et Pascha.* Quoted by S. Thom. Aq., *Catena Aurea, S. Mark,* Ch. XIV., p. 286. Ox. Edit.

dom and Love are as a triple flower which is called the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is sufficient in Himself, and His life is like an ocean in which all fertility, love and sovereign joy exist. But since benevolence and the longing to impart, to communicate the riches of love, are the true character and being of the Divinity, the Almighty seemed to find Himself straitened in the very immensity of His Being, and the longing to extend His goodness to others: In that "hour of love," creation was cast upon the chaos of matter, like a canvas on which God would express the magnificence of His Nature, an immense reservoir to contain the fulness of His mercy. "Love," says a holy Cardinal, "makes us beside ourselves, that is to say, it creates in us the need to come out of self, to live beyond ourselves. It seems such a feeling as this that God experienced in the day of Creation. His own Love forced Him to pour Himself into other beings."[3] "God," says S. Irenæus, "has not created man because He has need of him, but He needs a being on which He can pour His benefits."[4]

Love is, then, the first and last reason of the works of God; goodness comes in Divine floods from His eternal essence, just as light and heat shine from the sun. It has been said even of certain men that their first impulse was always good, this saying is above all true of God, Whose first and only motion, thought, and desire are always to do good. He only shows severity exceptionally, in spite of Himself, doing violence to His Heart, and even this severity, which touches individuals, is a calculated benefit for the ultimate good of His works as a whole, just as the severity of a general, in particular cases, aims at and results in the salvation of the whole army. We are accustomed to say that God does all for His glory; that is true, but in the

[3] Cardinal Contarini. See also S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, 2nd Pt., 2nd No., Qu. 175, Art. 2.

[4] S. Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, Bk. IV., Ch. XIV., p. 416. Edin. Edit.

sense that I have just pointed out; for as S. Thomas Aquinas, the Angel of the Schools, well remarks: "The glory of God is nothing else than the manifestation of His goodness, just as the glory of a mother is the revelation of her tenderness: all that God does is done to show His goodness. God does not seek profit from our piety but glory in the manifestation of His kindness. The end of all God does is divine goodness. The reason, therefore, of creation, is that the divine goodness should be spread abroad in things that are made."[5] He says again: "God does not seek glory for Himself, but for us." What glorious and loving words. God possesses from all eternity an infinite, incommunicable glory, which no creature can either increase or diminish; if He seeks to extend His glory, it is not for Himself but for our sakes, like the best of fathers, He works only for His family.

The same Doctor questions elsewhere whether the will of God has a cause, and at first he replies that it has not, because the will of God is to itself its own cause. Then, as if re-considering this first decision, he adds: "nevertheless we may assign a cause to the Will of God; it is His loving-kindness causes Him to will, and to put His will in motion."[6] Thus this sovereign Will of God which nothing can resist, which overcomes all obstacles, which "walketh upon the wings of the wind," this will, has, so to speak, its master and governor, and this ruler is its own goodness and love. "For love," says S. Gregory of Nazianzen, "is a sweet tyrant."[7]

The desire for good, the passion for good, the wish to communicate Himself under every possible form, such was the motive which determined God to create. The reason why we must soar so high to explain the

[5] S. Thom. Aq., *in Ep. I. ad Tim.*, Ch. I., t. VII., p. 252. *Ibid., Sum. Theo.*, Pt. I., 2 No., Qu. 114., Art. 1, Ans. 2.
[6] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, 2nd Pt., 2nd No., Qu. 132, Art. 1, Ans. 1. *Ibid., In Ep. ad Ephes.*, Ch. I., lect. I., t. VII., p. 77.
[7] S. Greg., *Orat.* 26, Ch. II.

mystery of the Eucharist, is that everything in the works of God is correlated, and in order to realise the extent of a river we must often ascend to its source.

2. God, then, created man to be a vessel into which He might pour His Attributes, a being is some way necessary to the outflow of His Love. And see how He delighted to embellish His masterpiece, how He Himself kneaded the clay which was to form the human body, how He shed upon this soul a ray of Divine glory! Nobility of mind, sanctity and breadth of affection, calm dignity in the innermost sanctuary; nothing is wanting to this Divine work; and lastly, like a royal crown came free will, and with it the power of choice and of loving intercourse like that of a child with its father. We can understand that God would rest after this work, His Heart and His Love were satisfied. From nothingness had come forth a creature, beautiful, pure, perfect as an angel, loving like a seraphim. Yes, Divine Love could be satisfied; the object of Creation was fulfilled, the goodness of God manifested.

Man thus created in an atmosphere of glory and happiness, fell afterwards through the perversion of his greatest gift, his free will; he slipped, so to speak, of himself from between the hands of Divine goodness, and God allowed him to fall for reasons which were wise and meant the highest kindness. He permitted this to show that man was free,—without which moral goodness and love would be impossible,—but that the Creator knew how to bring greater good even out of evil. And what happened? God had created, and He had united Himself to the reasonable creature, by the most excellent gifts of nature and grace, even to "making man in His own image and likeness."[8] But the Divine Redeemer, by an excess of love and mercy, which only increased in proportion to human ingratitude, our God ever supremely good, invented a new mode of communication, more perfect and more

[8] Gen. i. 26.

Divine even than the first: He united Himself to man in the most complete manner possible. He drew human nature to Himself, so as to make Himself one person with it. Thus, without detracting from His dignity as Creator, without losing any of His Divine attributes, He gave Himself to us by the highest degree of communication. The Church in contemplating these wonders, has been so overcome with love and confidence, that she has exclaimed: "O happy fault, which gained for us such a Redeemer! O felix culpa!" The Incarnation is, as it were, the re-making of the world by God; but when God retouches His work, it is always in order to make it more perfect. The sacred Humanity of Christ has been raised to such a high degree of honour, that in Itself it is worth more than all the worlds created. But this was not sufficient; the Word of God did not unite Himself only to the Humanity of Christ; He has lifted up the whole human race; He has united Himself to that nature which circulates in our veins. He is in it not in the full sense of His Incarnation as Christ, but He has so identified us with Himself that the Apostle does not hesitate to call us the members of the Body of Jesus Christ, "of His Flesh and of His Bones."[9] "Owing to this mystery," says S. Chrysostom, "we possess within ourselves the Son of God, we are made like unto Him, transformed into the same relationship, or the same nature of being."[10]

II.

But there is a greater mark of love even than the Incarnation and even the marvels we have just enumerated, are only fully realised in the mystery of the Eucharist, which carries on and imparts to each one of us the mystery of the Incarnation. It is in the Eucharist that God has proved how far Love can go. "By

[9] Eph. v. 30.
[10] S. Chrys., *On Gal. iii.* ver. 27, p. 60. Ox. Edit.

becoming Incarnate," says S. Hilary, "Christ took on Himself the nature of humanity as a whole, by the Eucharist He incorporates each of us into His Flesh. For He Himself is the Church, and by the Sacrament of His Body His beloved are wholly contained in Him."[11]

"The property of intimate affection," says S.Thomas, "is to live together and to attain to such a degree of union, that two lives become as one, and our Divine Master has desired to realise these two needs of our heart in the Divine Eucharist."[12]

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

[It is curious that the author has omitted to refer to the initial Sacrament of Baptism at this point. We are quite sure it was from no intentional disregard of the Sacrament of Regeneration by which each person is grafted into the Tree of Life, the Incarnate Christ, therefore we merely draw attention to the fact and give an additional note from the *Summa Theologica* of S. Thomas Aquinas, the Angel of the Church. "We are nourished from the same things of which we are made, but they do not come to us in the same manner; those out of which we are made come to us through generation, while the same, as nourishing us come through being eaten. Hence as we are new-born in Christ through Baptism, so through the Eucharist we feed on Christ."[13]]

1. First, then, true friends love and live together. Jesus Christ said to His Apostles: "I will not leave you orphans,"[14] and in order to fulfil His loving promise to the letter, He has made Himself the companion of our pilgrimage. At any hour of the day, the faith-

[11] S. Hilary, Bk. 8, *On the Trinity*, Bk. VIII. S. Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, Bk. IV., Ch. XXXIV., Sec. 4, p. 21. Edin. Edit.

[12] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, Part III., Qu. 75, Art. 1.

[13] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, Part III., Qu. 73, Art. 1.

[14] S. John xiv. 18 (marg.).

ful soul knows where to find her true friend, and when the heart is dried up, and the sight of the world produces only weariness, the soul knows her place of refuge, her sheltering for life and its hopes. We say that an hour's conversation in ordinary life with a friend restores the soul and refreshes it like a watered flower. When our hearts are weary, or troubled by sorrow, we love to take refuge with a friend to whom we can bring the burden of our life. Next to heavenly blessings, there is nothing so sweet and helpful as the gift of true friendship. "There is nothing on earth more delicious than true affection," says S. Bonaventura. "Better to be without the sun," exclaimed S. Chrysostom, "than the sweetness of friendship."[15] In the Divine Eucharist Jesus Christ is that true friend. At all times He says these sweet and consoling words. "Come unto Me, all ye that . . are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[16] A Philosopher once stated that he knew of no trouble that he could not soothe by an hour's reading. How much more truly may we state that there exist no human sorrows which cannot be calmed by half on hour's visit to the Blessed Sacrament. We cannot say what passes in this mysterious interview, what superhuman strength is given to the soul, but peace follows the storm, a soft breeze calms the waves, and every soul who has experienced this heavenly refreshment, has come forth stronger and purer. It is not, of course, the vision of heaven, nor the joys of eternity; for a life of trial is necessary to prepare us for our great destiny; it is a time of penance to purify the soul. But it is true to say that the clouds grow daily more transparent, and the soul attains a Divine intimacy which is stronger and deeper than all those of the world, and this intimacy is for the soul the source of all other affections.

The human soul often needs advice, as Holy Scrip-

[15] S. Chrys., *On Ep. 1 Thess., Ch. II., Hom. 2,* pp. 353—356. Ox. Edit.
[16] S. Matt. xi. 28.

ture says: "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel."[17] How often the strongest hearts are shaken in their course on the road of life. The soul looks in every direction, sees only thicker darkness; and can only rest on the Prophet's words. Lord—"Show Thou me the way that I should walk in."[18] A quarter of an hour's conversation with Him who is hidden under the Eucharistic veil, will teach us more about the things of time and eternity, and the way to deal with certain delicate questions, than the longest reflections, and the cleverest combinations of human wisdom. A calm, peaceful light dawns, and enlightens our heart, and the soul exclaims: "Lord, be Thou more and more 'a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' Thy Word is a lantern."[19] Friendship is also necessary in prosperity. The human heart has impulses, and inexplicable needs. Happiness is in itself a weight; we need to share it with someone, or it becomes too much for us to hold. Happiness is like water which flows between our hands. We feel the need of pouring it into a safe receiver like a precious liquor. Such to us is the Heart of God, and there happiness becomes more permanent, and is perfumed with life and immortality; all joys lose that character of change and uncertainty which too often poisons them. The Presence of God gives harmony to our earthly pleasures. What spoils our happiest days is the prospect of their approaching end, but when happiness is grafted upon the root of eternity, the leaves may change, but the tree remains, and the sweetest joys and pleasures will sprout afresh.

Finally, there are many circumstances in life, when, without any actual or positive reason, our heart needs a friend; if only to pour ourselves out to a loving heart. Thanks be to the Divine Mercy! there is not one of these blessings of true friendship but is found

[17] Prov. xxvii. 9.
[18] Ps. cxliii. 8.
[19] Psalm cxix. 105.

in Eucharistic intercourse. In prosperity, in adversity, in darkness, and in joy, Jesus Christ is the Friend none can replace, and Who, in need can replace all others. The Saints have obtained at the foot of the Altar that light and comfort which man so often needs in this life, and have exclaimed: "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me."[20] Thus Jesus Christ's first thought, in instituting the Eucharist, was to live with us; to be the companion of our pilgrimage, to walk with us like the best of friends. "It is the property of friendship," says S. Thomas, "to love to be with one's friends."[21] The world will never know how many tears have been dried, how many sorrows have disappeared, how much despair has been calmed at the foot of the Altar, that Sanctuary where Jesus Christ dwells under the veils of love. "It is God Himself who has created in the heart of man that emptiness which He alone can fill. . . . The impossibility of being happy without God arises from the act by which He made Himself the final end of man."[22]

2. But still this is not enough for love, at least for the love of God. "Love desires union," says S. Augustine, "it wishes to be with the person of its choice, and its aim is to realise that desire."[23] Jesus Christ said: "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." And in verses before, "As Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us. . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one . . . that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."[24] Elsewhere the Saviour said: "As My

[20] Ps. cxviii. 6.

[21] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.,* Part III., Qu. 75, Art. 1. *Ibid.* Part I., 2nd No., Qu. 38, Art. 3.

[22] See Dalgairns, *The Holy Communion,* Part II., Ch. I., pp. 96—97. Dublin Edit.

[23] S. Aug., *De Ordine,* Bk. II. *Ibid., Confessions,* Bk. IV., Ch. VI., p. 52. Ox. Edit. See S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.,* Pt. II., 2nd Div., Qu. 28, Art. 2.

[24] S. John xvii. 24 and 21, 23, 26. *Ibid.,* xv. 9.

Father hath loved Me, even so have I loved you." Which of us can comprehend the extent of the intimacy, the strength and the sweetness of the relationship between Jesus Christ and His Father? There is between Them a perpetual mingling of the same nature, under the influence of a love whose tenderness and depth are beyond earthly expression. It is love at its Infinite source, it is love in an ecstasy eternally pure and fertile. And yet Christ does not hesitate to use this incomparable love as a term of comparison, when He desires to express His Tenderness for us, and the union which He wills to establish with His beloved family. The Eucharist alone explains the Saviour's words.

There are in love different degrees of union, from simple kindliness to a perfect blending of natures, and although human perversity has tarnished the most holy of all things, there we find a Divine ideal understood by pure hearts, which floats over creation like sweet oil on muddy waters. This ideal has inspired the hymns of love which the Saints have loved to sing; it has transformed them into poets, it has given them a lyrical genius that repeats in a pure atmosphere lines which some ears are incapable of hearing. "Nothing is greater than love," says the author of the *Imitation*, "yea, it is a great and thorough good; . . . nothing is sweeter than love, nothing more courageous, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heaven and earth, because love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God."[25] The Saviour has carried love to its furthest limits; He has loved us passionately even to a holy folly. So there must be Divine passion and a kind of folly in the testament of His Love. What is the highest degree of union in love? It is when one being is incorporated into another, and they lose themselves in the ecstasy of unity. It is this method of union, more complete and more intimate than men can know, it is this ineffable

[25] Thom. à Kem., *Imit. Christ,* Bk. III., Ch. V.

invention of love, that the Saviour has chosen by which to testify His excessive love for our poor humanity. He has willed to mingle His Body with our body, His Blood with our blood, and to establish a unity than which we can conceive of nothing greater. "For," says S. Gregory of Nyssa, "we cannot become part of another body without being received inwardly as food and drink."[26] And this is the last degree of love which makes the transformation of our being.

You may be acquainted with the magnificent passage in which S. Cyril says: "Take two pieces of wax, and melt them at the fire; they melt one into the other, and the result is a homogeneous whole. Here we have a picture of what passes between Jesus Christ and the Christian who communicates."[27] "Let us unite ourselves to this Divine Flesh," says S. John Chrysostom, "that is what we do when we receive the heavenly nourishment that Christ has instituted to show us the greatness of His love. Such is the desire of love; this is what the servants of Job felt when they exclaimed in the ardour of their love: 'O that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.'"[28] "When we participate in the Eucharist," he says elsewhere, "we do not only take this Divine Food, but we consummate our union; for even as the Flesh is united to the Word, so are we united to Christ by this consecrated bread."[29] The strength of the expressions in the passages of the Greek Fathers are very remarkable, and cannot be translated into our language. The same terms which they use, to express the union of the Sacred Humanity of Christ with the Word, they employ to make us understand the union which takes place between us and

[26] S. Greg. de Nys., *Orat. Cat.*, Ch. XXXVII.

[27] S. Cyril, *On S. John*, Bk. IV., Ch. II. *Ibid., Catech. Lec. XXII., No. 4, on Mysteries*, p. 270. Ox. Edit. Quoted in Com. Corn. à Lapide on S. John vi. 57.

[28] Job xxxi. 31.

[29] S. Chrys., *On S. John, Hom. XLVI.*, No. 3, p. 399. Ox. Edit. *Ibid., On 1st Epis. to Cor., Hom. XXIV.*, No. 4.

Christ in the Eucharist.[30] The incredulous may smile, but this is the Christian truth; the Saints smiled also, but for happiness while tasting these sublime realities. If we study their lives, or listen to the expression of their feelings, they are an "enigma," the key to which is the Eucharist. Daily they become as Christs themselves, the natural consequence of the food which they receive so lovingly. "See," said our Lord to S. Catherine of Sienna, "with what love I have prepared for men the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in order that they might be changed into Me."

Bossuet is not afraid to tackle this question on its most difficult side; for there are things which Angels may repeat to each other with pure seraphic love, but which impure human ears cannot easily bear. Do not let us be afraid to repeat these great truths; it is good sometimes to make men understand that all is pure in the works of God, and that there is an ideal of holiness even in those things which men have most profaned. Listen to the words of the great Bishop of Meaux, and remember that to the pure all things are pure. "In the transports of human love, do we not know the desire to eat, to devour one another, to be incorporated with that which is loved, in order to possess it, be nourished by it, be united to it in every way. That which in human love seems fury and impossibility, is truth and wisdom in the love of Jesus. 'Take, eat, This is My Body.' Feed upon, not a part, not a fragment, but Me wholly. Let us unite ourselves, then, to Jesus, body to Body, spirit to Spirit. We must be united to the Flesh which the Word has taken, in order that by His Flesh we may enjoy the Divinity of the Word."[31]

[30] Bossuet, *Medit. sur l'Evangile, La Cène*, 1st Pt., 24th day.

[31] If unreflecting man has thought this mystery at first sight absurd and strange; if he has been scandalised to behold God make Himself LITTLE, in order to give Himself to be EATEN by man, let him study his own nature, to understand what love is.

Examine our deepest instincts, and try to grasp what love

Continuation of Note 31.

is, by catching nature in the act, or in action, and we shall soon see how simple and natural that is which at first for want of reflection appeared strange and weird. It has been well said that the ridiculous and the sublime meet; let us see whether this dogma will not force us on the contrary to recognise not the first but the sublime. Study the facts. Is not the qualification of LITTLE that which love delights to give to the loved object? Look at the child caressing its mother. "Little mother" *(petite mère)* is what its heart teaches it to repeat. . . . .

And yet, the expression GREAT means something beautiful and noble; whilst the expression LITTLE generally conveys the idea of weakness, meanness, even sometimes that which is vile and abject; greatness constitutes superiority, littleness inferiority. Let us think over this, and ask ourselves how it is love which usually delights to adorn the beloved one, with magnificent qualities, lavishes on its object the qualification of little? Is it not true that love is shown always by an effort to identify itself with another, to become as near as possible one? Why should love always will, in act as well as in word, naturally and without reflection, to lessen the object beloved? Why? . . . . Yet another observation, another fact remarked, will contain the answer.

Let us listen to a cry of nature which escapes from the cottage as well as from the palace; because it is the result of an inward instinct, of a fundamental law of our being. . . . . Let us take the fact as it stands: notice that mother with the child she loves so tenderly, or this husband showering marks of affection on his wife, and you will hear them use, smiling at the object of their love, that strange expression, which would seem ferocious under any other circumstances. "I would like to eat you!" What! eat the one you love! Yes, we all have at bottom an innate desire to eat, so as if it were possible to incorporate into ourselves the being we love. It means that love is a feeling which tends to the complete identification of the beings animated by it. Thus the mystery is made clear. If the one who loves, reveals his desire to make little, to compress the loved object, it means that he wishes to make it small enough to keep it in his breast; to eat it so that it may be one with him. Thus the man, who with regard to God is scandalised at the word COMMUNION, finds that his own life consists of a series of renewed communions, and he, who is shocked to hear that the Being from Whom all love emanates made Himself small, in order to be loved more, finds that by the very trend of his nature, he desires to make LITTLE all that he loves.—Marcadé, *Studies of Religious Knowledge.*

3. This is the highest point—the gathering up of Christianity. If anyone is inclined to smile, it proves that he has only understood man's most beautiful feeling in a carnal manner, that the infinite has never entered into his dreams, nor his heart beat in unison with the divine, and that he has never understood these words in the *Imitation:* "Nothing is greater than love . . .—nothing better on earth or in heaven."[32] We Christians who believe in love, but in true, pure love, love, of which that which you profane perhaps daily is only a transitory likeness; we Christians who the more our hearts are raised above this world, so the more we need love, *we* understand this life in God. We possess the noble and divine ambition to be transformed daily into the Divine Being, to be changed into Him by love. It is the dream of a host of holy souls who come each morning to receive this divine manna, as the seed of immortality and the germ of a Divine nature—*"For we are made partakers of Christ."*[33]

Call it if you will a delirium of love, it is the truest, the strongest, the sweetest and, I will add, the most enlightened of all man's great needs, it is the delirium of the noblest reason. We all hunger and thirst for God, when we hunger and thirst for infinite truth and beauty, and if we knew that somewhere there existed under a sensible form, this ocean of truth and beauty for which our mind and our heart long, we should rush to plunge into it, and disappear under its waves. For us Catholics, the Eucharist is the answer to these desires, the reply is not complete, and will only become so in eternity; but on earth there is a beginning and an initiation.[34] It is not, therefore, boldness on our part to consider that the Eucharist is the Masterpiece of Divine Love; that love can go no further, and that this mystery exhausts as it were the union of the

[32] Thom. à Kem., *Imitation of Christ,* Bk. III., Ch. V., No. 3.
[33] Heb. iii. 14.
[34] S. Chrys., *On S. Matt., Hom. LXXXII.,* Sec. 5, pp. 1091—3. Ox. Edit.

Creator with the creature. We can receive Him daily and be transformed into Him, and become like Him by the conformity which love claims.

4. After such marvels, which language can scarcely express, we ought indeed to believe in love, and to exclaim with the Apostle: "God *so* loved the world, sic Deus dilexit!"[35] He has loved in no self-interested manner, for He gave Himself to us—not as friends in this world often do, in order to receive, and so to satisfy a want in themselves—God has loved us, from His heartfelt longing to do us good. That was not sufficient, He has loved us as God only can, that is to say, without placing any limit to His love except that which necessarily separates the Creator from His creature. He has loved us even to the depths of the ignominy of Calvary, even so far as to clothe Himself with a material covering in which He can be to us food and drink, in order to penetrate the most subtle veins of our being, and to bear love with Him into the secret marrow of body and soul. "So God loves." We believe in human love, but we do not know that the purest human love, with its most ardent longings, is only a drop, an atom, compared with the love of God. True Christians are bound to believe in Divine Love; they admit that everything is possible to a God Who is so passionately loving and merciful. They have but one reply for every objection raised. "God has so loved." What answer could you make to a child who to any objection of supposed impossibility, replied: "My mother loves me so. If you knew her you would say that everything was possible to her love, her affection." When the Eucharistic question is placed on this high ground, with its roots in the depths of eternal love, human arguments are as straws consumed by the fire, even before they are raised. Besides, we know that this one simple thought, "God so loved us, Sic Deus dilexit nos!" has more power to enable us to understand the mystery, than the highest and most subtle

[35] S. John iii. 16.

considerations of philosophy. "He that loveth, knoweth what I say,"[36] says the author of the *Imitation,* for love is the greatest of all masters; it teaches the most profound mysteries, and knows what can be undertaken. But if anyone does not love God, these thoughts will be to him as incomprehensible as colours to a blind man; though because a blind man denies the fact of colours, it does not follow that light and colour are not rejoicing those eyes which love to see the sun in all its splendour!

III.

1. There is one further step to emphasise in the development of our doctrine. The property of love is to find its like in objects, or to make them like itself. The Eucharist unites us so closely to God, that we become the same body.[37] Now love works here according to its natural laws; that is to say, that the Eucharist continues in each Christian a sort of permanent Incarnation of the Son of God,[38] in the sense that daily, by a miracle of love, the Son of God joins Himself to the nature of each one of us. "In the same way," says S. Chrysostom, "that the Body of Jesus Christ is united to the Word, so are we by the Eucharist united to the Sacred Humanity of Christ."[39] Notice the depth and the extent of these words; by the strength of the Sacrament of the Altar, and by its permanent action on our souls, a union so intimate is formed between Christ and us, that in order to express it, there is no term of comparison except the personal relations between the Son of God and His Flesh. This union is, of course, not a hypostatic one, as in the Incarnation, but it goes as far as love can conceive. Yes, by the Eucharist we pass into God. The Incarnation is

[36] Thom. à Kem., *The Imitation.*
[37] S. Cyril, *Catech. Lec. XXII.,* Sec. 3. Ox. Edit.
[38] S. Leo, *Libr. Sacram. Eccl.,* Rom. Serm. 63, Ch. VII.
[39] S. Chrys., *Hom. XXIV. on 1st Epis. to Cor.,* Sec. 7 and 8, pages 334—5. Ox. Edit.

no longer only an unique fact, it is a Divine covering which love spreads over the whole of humanity, in order to absorb it, so to speak into a life in which the soul cries out: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ Who liveth in me." For the property of love is to give equality of being, as far as the nature of things will allow.

Tradition is rich in thoughts on this subject. . . . .

"It is the union of love in excess," says Albert the Great; "for by this Sacrament Christ so cleaves to us, that He dwells in us and we in Him, in such an intimate manner that He mingles with our inmost parts, and we are incorporated with Him."[40] "Not only are we in Christ," says S. Augustine, "but we are Christ, because the Head and the body is the whole Christ. The Christian desires this grace, which by its holy unction makes him the Body of Christ, and which will only be perfected in eternity. On earth, this unction, this grace, works by means of the Sacrament; and the Eucharist gives us a glimpse of what we shall become one day. So we ought to yearn tenderly for the ineffable gift here, and also with holy joy, because it is the dawn of our future destiny."[41]

Finally, we may conclude by quoting Corneille à Lapide: "As it was suitable that the whole Divinity should be communicated to the Humanity of Christ, so it was suitable that this Humanity and all the benefits of the Incarnation should be communicated in a wonderful manner to other men. As the human nature of Christ exists ineffably in the Word, and the Word in It, so the Christian who communicates dwells in a special manner in Christ, and Christ in him."[42]

We see, then, to what heights of glory man attains in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, a glory which is the consequence of God's love, for love desires to shower

[40] Albert the Great, Vol. XXI., p. 6.
[41] S. Aug., *On Ps. xxvii.*, 2nd Expos., Sec. 2, p. 192.
[42] Suarez, *de Euch.* Corn à Lapide, *Com. in Prov.*, Ch. XXIII. v. 2, p. 658.

glory on the beloved object, and here we have reached the reality and the complete fulfilment of Christ's great prophecy. "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory[43] . . . and the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them, that they may be . . . perfect in one."[43] The Eucharist alone explains completely these wonderful words; by the virtue of this Divine Sacrament, something of the Divine nature is daily infused into the Christian. Do we not now believe that there is a true and real meaning in these words of Holy Scripture. "I said ye are gods."[44] "We are made partakers of Christ."[45] "That ye might be partakers of the Divine nature."[46] We are indeed gods, we ought to become as gods as far as it is possible to realise the name.[47] It is not wonderful, then, that the Christian should be commanded to respect both himself and his brethren, nor even that God Himself should treat us with respect. We supplement as it were the Body of His Son, we carry on in ourselves the mystery of the Incarnation, and we may say, borrowing the thought of S. Paul, God, as the centre of creation, exercises a universal dominion; on His Right Hand is the Sacred Humanity of Christ subject to the Father, but this sacred Humanity is continued in human generations, and has its roots in each one of us by virtue of the Eucharist. Thus "God (on account of this life), is all in all" for true Christians.[48] He is in Christ, in heaven and on earth, and by Christ this Divine virtue runs like a thread throughout the whole of human nature. And this great mystery will only be consummated in the next life; then, according to the magnificent thought of S. Augustine, we shall not only

[43] S. John xvii. 24—*Ibid.* 22, 23.
[44] Ps. lxxxii. 6.
[45] Heb. iii. 14.
[46] 2 Peter i. 4.
[47] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum. Theo.*, Pt. III., Qu. 73, Art. IV., Ans. 3—*Ibid., On the Sac. of the Altar*, Ch. XIV.
[48] 1 Cor. xv. 26—28.

belong to Christ, but shall be Christ, the Body of Christ, and then the ineffable future of which he obtained glimpses by means of the Eucharist, will be realised.[49]

Bossuet says that God has not only created us by His Word, but by His breath, to teach us that our soul comes from the innermost parts of God, just as our bodily respiration does. But as breath or respiration comes forth only to re-enter the body, so our soul only came forth from God to return to Him again, He has only breathed it forth in order to breathe it in again.[50] On the day of Creation, God breathed us forth, to show us that He drew us as it were from the region of His Heart.[51] Now by love He would breathe us into Him again. And we may boldly call the Eucharist the supreme effort of God's in-breathing.

In spite of this, Christianity has been accused of depraving mankind! We should rather say that religion has raised human nature to such heights that the light is too strong and the glory too dazzling. And yet His glory is not too much for us, for we come of a Divine race. "Genus Dei," "The Offspring of God,"[52] and as we follow the steps of love, we re-ascend to the heights of our heavenly origin.

2. And it is not only on the soul that the mystery of the Eucharist reflects a torrent of glory; but also on the body, this living organ, this instrument of virtue for the soul. I do not mean here that divine glory which God has at times communicated to the face of His Saints, and which has its primal source in the Eucharist. The face of Daniel and his companions, says Holy Scripture, appeared fairer and fatter than all those of the young men of the court who ate of the King's meat. The faces of the Saints are better than

[49] S. Aug., *On Ps. xxvi.* as above.
[50] Bossuet, *Sur l'excellence de l'âme. Lettres de piété,* Vol. XI., p. 622.
[51] Gen. ii. 7.
[52] Acts xvii. 28—29.

those of the children of men; they bear that freshness of Divine life which is not found upon earth. The Saints, like Daniel, have a special food, and this food has an effect both material and spiritual upon the body.[53] But I am not wishing now to dwell on this glory which shines out in saintly faces on earth, because above and beyond all it is for eternity that the Holy Eucharist is preparing to clothe our material frame with a glorious mantle of light. On earth God only partially gives glory to the human body, because it is a slave who cannot be ennobled all at once, and might fall short of its rank. A slave who is emancipated too soon, revolts, and commits excesses, which place him beneath the animals. But in eternity, God will remove all checks to His love, and the body will become transparent under the pressure of glory. The divine Eucharist will be one of the principal causes of this Divine glory of the human body. By it the germs of the resurrection, the seeds of immortality, are deposited in us daily. After some years of this slow and hidden infusion, the preparatory work will be accomplished; like the transformation of the insect, which breaks its chrysalis, and soars on shining wings. The Council of Nice calls this Sacrament "the symbol of the resurrection." S. Ignatius of Antioch, "the remedy of immortality."[54] S. Cyril, "A food which nourishes us for immortality and eternal life." "What!" says S. Irenæus, "shall our body be delivered up for ever to corruption, which has been nourished by the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ?" No, no, it cannot be![55] far be it from us to think that God would abandon to total destruction the work of His hands, the object of His care, the vessel of His breath, the queen of Crea-

[53] Daniel i. 15.

[54] S. Ignatius, *Epis. to Ephes.*, Sec. 20—*vide ibid., Epis. to Smyrneans*, Sec. 6, p. 108. "Breaking one Bread, which is the medicine of immortality." p. 69. Edin. Edit.

[55] S. Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, Bk. V., Ch. XXXIII., No. 1, p. 144. Edin. Edit.

tion, the sister of Christ. "This good God," says Tertullian, "Who has commanded us to love our neighbour, wills to do Himself that which He commands. He will love this flesh which is His neighbour in so many ways; He will love it in spite of its infirmities, in spite of its dishonour, in spite of its iniquities, in spite of its condemnation. Do not then any longer reproach me with the weakness of my flesh, for weakness and dishonour which expect God, which hope in God, are honoured by Him."[56] Every one of these grand words are as a flash of light, which reveals the glory of the body, even in ignominy, and shows us that this weakness, this frailty, is in a sense necessary for the outflowing of the goodness, grace, mercy and liberality of God. Let us weigh these words, they point to the abyss of human misery, but also the far deeper and vaster depths of God's mercy; they even show us that without these human weaknesses, these infirmities of the flesh, the richest attributes of God would have been deprived of their power of action. O body of man, O glorious clothing of the sons of Adam, God owes you this honour, for He must love that which belongs to Him, and you are so very near to Him. He owes it to the body of His Son, for the Incarnate Word has become mingled with you, in order to communicate to you His Divinity, and to prepare you for glory. Thus the Eucharist, being itself an abyss of love, leads us to an abyss of glory, for "one deep calleth another." When God loves, He wills to honour.

In these depths of Divine love, so much love and glory shine out upon human nature, that we are tempted to cry out: "It is enough, Lord, enough, Thou dost too much for Thy friends." But we must never forget the words of the Angelic Doctor, which explain these incomprehensible mysteries to us. "In His excess of love God continually needs to go forth

[56] Tertullian, *On the Resur. of the Flesh,* Ch. VIII. and IX., p. 230. Edin. Edit.

out of Himself in order to do good."[57] The Eucharist ought to make this plain to us. God truly here is drawn by a passionate Love. "He wills to give Himself even more than a mother and unites us to Himself in very substance."[58]

You have heard of that system called pantheism, according to which all creatures are substantial parts of God, and like evolutions of the Divine Being through time and space, an absurd and immoral system which leads to nothing less than to the destruction of the Divine nature, and would make crime and disorder Divine. But, as has been said, error springs from the ground of truth, it is a counterfeit of truth, and often the deeper the error, the greater and more sublime the truth to which it is attached. There is in man such a thirst for God, that he aspires to mount the throne of eternity, and he has reason; "for the royal child likes to play on his father's throne." Both order and disorder are in this desire; that is what constitutes truth and virtue, or error and sin. God has raised man, so far as to transform him into Himself by the mystery of the Eucharist, not that this transformation is complete and substantial, for it leaves to man, at least here below, his weak side as the creature, it does not take from man his personality, but completes it by union with the Son of God. Thus the creature's desire is satisfied, so far as the nature of things permits, and the attributes of the Creator remain inviolable; while in this way we may say a grand system of "Christian pantheism"[59] is constituted.

S. Bernard said: "In order to know God we must love Him." And in another sense I say: "To know the works of God, is to know that God is love."[60]

[57] S. Thom. Aq., Part II., Div. 2, Qu. 175, Ans. 1 (quoted from Dionysius).

[58] S. Chrys., *Hom. LXXXII. on Matt.*, Sec. 5, p. 1092. Ox. Edit.

[59] Mme. Swetchine, *Lettre à M. de Melun*, Vol. II., p. 161.

[60] S. Bernard, *Song of Songs*, Serm. 8, No. 9.

It is quite possible that to many minds all that has been said is mere folly; but it will not be the first time that Gospel truths have been despised as mere dreams. We reply that the Christian God is not the God of philosophy; He is not an abstract God, seated on His throne, and only occupying Himself with things of this world like a master who visits his property at intervals. The Christian's God unites in Himself all the feelings of tenderness which the human tongue can enumerate; and all the love that is expressed in the name of father, mother, husband and friend, can only give a faint picture of His love, which seems ready any moment to break through the dykes of justice, and to flood the whole world. When love reaches such a height, there is nothing it will not do; even what might appear degrading under other circumstances. It makes itself little, and endures every degree of humiliation short of dishonour to attain the object of its love; he who cannot understand the nobility and beauty of such conduct, proves that he has never loved, or at any rate has not the slightest conception of Divine love. To reproach God with the mystery of the Eucharist, is like reproaching a father for his kindness, and a mother for her tenderness. Let him who dares do so! But we believe in love; we believe in Divine love, so we expect to find it everywhere. We admire in the Eucharist the greatest glory of God, the Love, which pours itself out in floods upon the earth, and our reply is to chant the Prophet's hymn. "To whom hath the root of Wisdom been revealed or who hath known her wise counsels? To whom hath He given power to declare His works, and who shall reckon His noble acts and tell out His mercies?"[61] [62] The Church, contemplating the marvels of the Incarnation, exclaims in the Office for Easter Eve: "O happy fault of Adam which merited to have such a Redeemer."[63]

[61] Bossuet, *2nd Serm. for All Saints' Day*, 1st Pt.
[62] Ecclus. i. 6; xviii. 4—6.
[63] S. Thom. Aq., *Sum.Theo.*, Pt. III., Qu. 1, Art. 3 and Art. 1.

We will close with a final quotation from the Angelic Doctor which leads up to these last words.

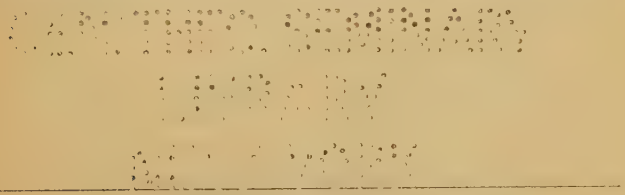
" By the mystery of the Incarnation are made known at once the goodness, wisdom, justice, power and might of God. The goodness, for He did not despise the weakness of His own handiwork; the justice since He caused the tyrant to be overthrown by none other than man, yet did not snatch men forcibly from death; the wisdom, for He found a suitable discharge for a most heavy debt; the power, for there is nothing more infinitely mighty than for God to become incarnate. . . It belongs to the very essence of goodness to communicate itself to others. . . ." (And further on.)

God allows evil to happen in order to bring a *greater* good therefrom; hence it is written (Rom. v. 20): " Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Hence, too, in the blessing of the Pascal Candle we say: " O felix culpa," " O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer."

Let these be our last words on this great mystery of love; we repeat with the joy of a sick man restored to health: O happy fault, since it has procured for us so much love! O happy fault, since it has obtained for us such a height of glory! O happy fault, since nothing more is wanting to our happiness and glory but the happiness and glory of Eternity!

Laus Deo.

Benedictus in eternam Sanctissimum Sacramentum.



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